Clauses 2 to 5 were added to the Bill.

Clause 1, the Enacting Formula and the Title were added to the Bill.

SHRI AKHILESH PRASAD SINGH: Sir, I beg to move:

"That the Bill be passed."

The question was put and the motion was adopted.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI DINESH TRIVEDI): Hon. Members, we shall now take up the next business of the House, that is, the Short Duration Discussion. ...*(Interruptions)*... I have already mentioned that the Special Mentions will be taken up tomorrow. That is the directive of the hon. Chairman. Short Duration Discussion on the state of agriculture, poverty and unemployment in the country in the light of Mid-Term Appraisal of the Tenth Five Year Plan, Shri Sitaram Yechury. This is his maiden speech and I have the pleasure of being in the Chair when he makes his maiden speech.

SHORT DURATION DISCUSSION

The State of Agriculture, Poverty and Unemployment in the country in the light of Mid-Term Appraisal of the Tenth Five Year Plan

SHRI SITARAM YECHURY (West Bengal): Thank you, Mr. Vice-Chairman, Sir. This is my maiden speech. So, it is only natural that I will be both overawed and apprehensive about many things that I have to learn of this August House. I had come here, for the first time, only yesterday. Keeping that in mind, I am very fortunate, I think, to initiate this discussion because this is an issue which is very, very close to the heart of every Indian and it has, perhaps, very grave consequences for the future of millions of our people. A proper reading of the Mid-Term Appraisal will actually paint a picture which is not very comfortable about the state of our economy. The hon. Finance Minister is here. There have been candid admissions about many things that did not happen according to the envisaged Plan and, in fact, there is a candid admission that the GDP growth rate is, on an average, only 6.5 per cent as opposed to the target of 8.1 per cent. That is concerning the

overall economy, which is not the subject matter of this discussion. But concerning agriculture, employment and poverty, the situation that is reported in the Mid-Term Appraisal is, indeed, very grave. My submission would be that what has been stated in the Mid-Term Appraisal and the solutions that have been suggested somehow do not match each other. The solutions suggested, I think, will only aggravate the problem further and it is actually like cutting the branch on which you are sitting. In order to explain this, I would only like to quote certain figures which are available in the Mid-Term Appraisal. In fact, what has emerged is that the *per capita* availability of foodgrains for consumption in the country has declined from 177 kilograms in 1991 to an abysmally low level of 155 kilograms, when this Appraisal took place. Now 155 kilos per head, Mr. Finance Minister, is a very disturbing fact because this level is very close to the period when the Second World War was taking place in the world. I mean we had declined almost to that level. Fifty years ago, what was the per capita availability of foodgrains, you have come down to that level. As far as the average, that is there for 2002-03, in terms of availability of foodgrains, it is 155.15. Now this is the drop that is taking place in terms of availability of foodgrains. If you look at the foodgrains output per head, the output has not dropped substantially. It has only dropped from 178 to 173. But your consumption dropped substantially from 177 to 155. It means that the degree of poverty and the inequalities in the country are growing and this is a fact that the Mid-Term Appraisal has itself admitted. If this is the state of affairs in terms of availability of foodgrains, if you look at cereals, if you look at pulses, again the consumption and availability are also on constant decline. So the seriousness of this issue also emerges. The Mid-Term Appraisal says, "The magnitude of decleration in agriculture was such that although 2003-04 was a year of excellent monsoon and record production, per capita output in that year was less than in 1996-97 in every crop sector, except horticulture." That means overall, in the first three years, our agriculture growth in the Tenth Plan has been only about one per cent. This brings us to the point that in order to tackle poverty or in order to generate employment, it is absolutely necessary that the investment in the agriculture sector, that we are planning to do,—it is part of the Finance Minister's assurance when he presented the Budget for this year and also part of the National Common Minimum Programme—we will have to enhance or increase the levels of investment.

[MR. CHAIRMAN in the Chair]

What is required is actually to increase very massively the levels of investment that will have to take place in agriculture. This is where I would like to quote from the Mid-Term Appraisal. It says, "The rural distress that has surfaced in many parts of the country is grounded in reality." I recollect when all this discussion about 'India Shining' was going on, when we were pointing out the actual reality at the ground level, there were very few who would even reflect that concern in the last six years. But we are happy that the Mid-Term Appraisal has come out candidly and it says that the problem of this rural distress was not purely a distributional one, it was entirely because of the lack of growth of demand, that is, the lack of purchasing power among the rural people in India and it is this point that we will have to seriously address. I will come to that subsequently. Unfortunately, the solution suggested, I am afraid, will only contract purchasing power further rather than expand the purchasing power in the hands of the people. If this is the state of agriculture and agriculture investment, there is again a serious situation that you will find in terms of employment. Here again the Mid-Term Appraisal has candidly admitted that the employment situation in our country was abysmal in the sense that on the basis of the current daily status—this itself is a nebulous concept, Mr. Chairman, Sir, if one day in a year you are employed and on that day the survey takes place, then you are counted as employed; but even giving them the benefit of doubt for all that—it is said that employment would have increased from 8.87 per cent in the base year 2001-02 to 9.11 per cent. Again, if you, as I said, with all the caveats and conditions, interpret these statistics, even then the Mid-Term Appraisal states that this increase in the unorganised sector in response to growth is actually a contraction in employment in the organised sector. A contraction in employment in the organised sector, which is for the first time being admitted in the official documents, of this dimensional scale, that has taken place means that we will not be in a position to tackle poverty. If the purchasing power in the hands of 70 per cent of Indians living on agriculture today is declining, if employment is actually not growing or declining in the organised sector and there is no regulation of this growth of employment or even security in the unorganised sector. In this sort of a situation, I think, the prescription for tackling these problems which I have said,

was actually faulty. Why I say this, Mr. Chairman, Sir, is keeping in mind the suggestions that have been made in order to improve the situation. Firstly, it is suggested that the water tariff must be increased. Now, all of us know that our agriculture is entirely water-dependent. But they have now said that water tariff will have to be increased. And what is suggested, and this is what makes it a little uncomfortable, is that the water regulators could set differential water tariffs for high water consuming crops, link with ground water status, etc., etc. The whole point is that the water consumption, the water used by the Indian farmers, henceforth will not only be regulated but it will also be costly. In a situation where you are saying that agricultural production is declining, you are stagnating at 1 per cent growth rate in the last three years, the purchasing power of your people is declining; your foodgrain production is declining; your foodgrains availability per head is declining, and then, you want to increase your input cost, which will only make matters worse and compound the problem further. Therefore, the solution that the Mid-term Appraisal is talking about is actually going to accentuate the description that the Mid-term Appraisal itself has given about the grave situation in our country. Similarly, it is again talking in terms of rationalising your Public Distribution System or actually bringing in public distribution abandonment. There is a suggestion, which is very, very uncomfortable, namely, doing away with the BPL and the APL categories and abandon the universal Public Distribution System, in the conditions that we are discussing today, whereby it is said that the PDS prices should be reviewed. And what is most disturbing here is that it says, "There is a strong case for moving a uniform PDS pricing. In other words, the PDS should not be viewed as a poverty reducing instrument as much as an instrument for protecting the common man,..." —this is where an exclamation mark is required—"including the poor by stabilising the issue prices at a level which may imply only a limited subsidy but which insulates the consumers from sudden increases in prices due to scarcity." Now, this would have been a prescription in a society which is not the current Indian society. What we have seen in the last four or five years is a vastly accumulated foodgrains stock in our country, when a large number of our people were actually dying out of starvation and where there have been distress suicides. This is an issue which has been debated and discussed in this House on many occasions in the past. But why is there this mismatch? Why do you have foodgrains in

your stocks and why are people dying out of hunger? This accumulation of foodgrains has happened not because of overproduction, but this accumulation of foodgrains is taking place because people who needed them do not have the purchasing power to buy them. And, it is this decline in the purchasing power that has to be addressed. But, instead of keeping this in mind, you are talking in terms of eliminating the BPL category altogether, revising upwards the prices of the foodgrains issued under the PDS which is only a step towards actually eliminating the Public Distribution System itself which will bring disastrous consequences in the light of growing poverty and unemployment that we have spoken of.

I think the second prescription that the Mid-term Appraisal talks about is also totally contradictory to its own analysis and appraisal of the situation in the country.

The third is the question of fertiliser subsidy. It again talks and I quote: "In terms of rationalising the subsidy across different types of fertiliser use, etc. and combining it with mechanism that would ensure that all resources are ploughed back..." But the point to be noted is, curtailment is suggested in the name of targeting the fertiliser subsidies or targeting the subsidies to the required and needy farmers. If the policy prescription is to reduce the fertiliser subsidies in order to make the input cost higher, then, again, you are negating the very analysis that you have spoken of where you have said that agriculture production is stagnating.

Now, apart from these three suggestions, the fourth one, I think, is an extremely dangerous one, which is, the question of subsidies. I mean, there is a very dangerous formulation that the Mid-Term Appraisal makes. It says that the question of funding public investment still remains; subsidy reduction is one way to find resources. Now, if you are going to find resources to increase investment in agriculture by cutting subsidies in agriculture, that is, robbing Paul to pay Peter. This is not going, in any way, to solve the problem. It is actually trying to tell the working class today that you accept voluntary retirement, or, you accept retrenchment, or, you accept being unemployed today so that there can be more employment tomorrow. I mean, this sort of a

3.00 P.M.

prescription is as ridiculous as that, that you are advocating unemployment for greater employment, and a person who is working is being thrown out of the job; that is a separate issue altogether. But, in terms of subsidies here, there is an implicit, or, an inherent suggestion that unless we reduce subsidies, or, cut subsidies, there won't be investible funds. Now, this, Mr. Chairman, is a very dangerous potent for our country's future, because what we are talking about is that there are two types of subsidies. One is that we subsidise the poor; one is that we subsidise for increasing industrial production; This is also subsidising the rich by reducing your taxes, which you are no collecting from them. A five per cent reduction in direct taxes is actually tantamount to a five per cent subsidy to those sections. But for them, we call it incentive; for the poor, we call it subsidy. And you want to cut this subsidy! And you want to increase that incentive! That is not acceptable in a situation where poverty is rising, where unemployment is rising, where agricultural production is stagnating. Therefore, in sum, what I feel is that what has been suggested in this Mid-Term Appraisal has essentially serious consequencies. There is a very interesting chapter which says, 'The Way Forward'. And in 'The Way Forward', much of the suggestions are actually taking us backwards. And one is focussed on reducing subsidies; the second one is that support systems will have to be rejuvenated, etc., which is a good thing; but public investment, and the funding of public investment, will have to be taken up by cutting subsidies. Now, therefore, what I would suggest is that what needs to be done, if I may be allowed to make some suggestions while initiating this discussion, is this.

But before I come to those suggestions, there is another disturbing aspect which the Government must please take cognisance of. It is that in these first three years of the Tenth Plan, the actual utilisation of resources in the Ministry of Agriculture has only been 43.7 per cent, while it ought to have been 66 per cent, at least. This utilisation of the allocated resources is also not taking place when we ourselves admit that there has been a growth in poverty, growth in unemployment and growth in misery; and, we would compliment the Government, for the first time, and very correctly, for actually, candidly, coming out with an assessment that there is rural distress in our country, and for admitting

that this rural distress is not a distibutional creation; it is not because of distributional problems; but it is because of declining purchasing power. So, if this is the anylysis, with which I would entirely agree, then the prescriptions will have to be sought elsewhere, and not by reducing the subsidies for the poor, not by increasing the input costs, not by making the inputs available to them more dearly, and not by dismantling the public distribution system. in fact, on the contrary, given this reality, the universalisation of the public distribution system is the direction in which we should move, not in the direction of dismantling it. Now, given this, what needs to be done, something which we have been discussing with the Finance Minister, and I am glad that we can actually, formally, discuss it in the House, is that the only solution which I feel is both humane and based on sound economic theory—I believe, it is also sound economics—is to restore the lost internal purchasing power through a universal Employment Guarantee Scheme. We would compliment the Government for having introduced that in the Lok Sabha, even though, in a partial way; we would want a universal scheme in the urban areas also. But, as we all agree, to begin with, we think this is a very significant step and, I think, it is a very momentous time in India that for the first time in independent India the Government is taking the legal responsibility—and I underline the word 'legal responsibility'—for providing employment. That is to be complimented. But, the restoration of the purchasing power to our country's nearly 700 million people—these are the figures we are talking of—has to be done, at least, by spending what I would reckon about Rs. 65,000 crores to Rs. 75,000 crores annually on rural development. This sounds very large, but if you look at it, it is only about 2.3 per cent of the GDP that we are talking of. If we are able to spend this 2.3 per cent of our GDP annually and slowly increase it in the next two yars of the Plan to about four per cent, from this 2.3 per cent, then, I think, this problem that we have, and the dimension of the problem that we have, we can seriously start tackling it. Now, the moment we say this, naturally, the Finance Minister would definitely say, I am anticipating, "Where do we find our resources"? Yes, that is an issue on which all of us will have to put our heads together. But, we would only want to remind once again what has been part of the public domain of national discourse that the Finance Minister himself has said that there is so much of unpaid taxes, and he has promised to go after them to collect it.

SHRI NILOTPAL BASU (West Bengal): Full amount.

SHRI SITARAM YECHURY: Yes, full amount, and he has assured that he is going to go after them to collect this amount. We would be very happy if you bring it back. We are talking of huge amounts. It is not a paltry amount. We are really talking of huge amounts of unpaid taxes. You have these NPAs with our nationalised banks, the figures of which are now going up to over a lakh of crores of rupees. Now, over lakhs of crores of rupees of this sort of money is legitimately due to the Government and to the public sector banks, I think, speedier steps must be taken to actually bring back this money so that part of that could be used. Even if all the NPAs will return and the Government were to borrow from the nationalised banks, what we are talking of the rural development escalation in the budget....(*interruptions*)

SHRI V. NARAYANASAMY (Pondicherry): Why don't you join the Government?

SHRI SITARAM YECHURY: I am sorry. (*Interruptions*)

SHRI PENUMALLI MADHU (Andhra Pradesh): Sir, he is disturbing the hon. Member.

SHRI SITARAM YECHURY: With all humility,I thank you very much for the gracious offer to join the Government. (*Interruptions*) With the same degree of grace, Sir, I decline it only for the fact that many things which I want to do which may not be palatable to you. But, we will allow you to do what you want to do, so far and so long as you are confining yourself to the Common Minimum Programme, and that is the only condition that we are putting. Therefore, what we are suggesting, Sir, we can be of assistance, we can help you, if you want me to go after somebody to collect back the dues that he owes to the Government, you tell me. If your machinery has failed, then, I will help you in doing it. But, the point here I am emphasising is, there is no other alternative going by the analysis and the description given in your Mid-term Appraisal concerning agriculture, concerning levels of poverty, concerning the unemployment situation. There is no way except by increasing dramatically or even significantly your public investment in the country. That is the only way that we will have to move and I am sure that the UPA Government will realise the situation that is happening

in the world as well. In the last couple of years, there have been seven countries in the Latin America where the Governments have changed precisely because of these issues. Now, we don't want such a situation to befall to this Government in our country. Therefore, we would want them to seriously address these issues that I have raised. I think, the other aspect which, I finally want to place before all of you is, there is a need for increasing significantly public investment and reversing the trends in unemployment and poverty, increase in poverty also has to do a lot with the demographic composition of India today. Sir, 54 per cent of India's population is below the age of 25 years. We are one of the youngest countries in the world. Now, this youth, which is the future of this country, if you are not able to give a proper diet and keep them healthy, if you are not able to give them proper education and train them—this trained and healthy youth is the asset for India's future—and if you want to develop this assest there is no other way except for the Government to enhance its public investment. So, for India's future, I beseech this Government to take the analysis of the Mid-term Appraisal seriously and not to take its conclusions, or, in fact, to reject many of its conclusions which talk in terms of reduction of subsidies, etc., and work towards increasing public investment, and, I hope the Government will heed our advice. Thank you, very much, Sir.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you, Mr. Yechury, for your maiden speech.

SHRI BALBIR K. PUNJ (Uttar Pradesh): Mr. Chairman, Sir, thank you very much for having allowed me to participate in a discussion on the state of agriculture, poverty and unemployment in the country in the light of Mid-term Appraisal of the Tenth Five Year Plan.

I heard Mr. Sitaram Yechury with rapt attention and I fully agreed with him when he said that this document, Mid-term Appraisal of the Tenth Five Year Plan, prepared by the Planning Commission, is a very candid document, a very honest assessment of the economy and it has brought clearly the problems we are facing and it has also made a series of suggestions.

Where I would like to warn the Government is this. To the extent Mr. Yechury has analysed the problems facing the economy, he has analysed the problems of unemployment, of poverty, and of agriculture and we should take him seriously. But when it comes to solutions, I would like

to warn the Government not to fall in the trap and not go by what he has just now suggested. He has said, Sir, we ignore all the solutions which have been suggested in the Mid-term Appraisal and accept the remedies which he has suggested.

Upto 1990, Sir, we had a control and command economy. We know the results. We know what happened in 1991. We followed the socialist model of the economy, that is, the State taking over all the responsibilities, not allowing any initiative by common citizens and treating the citizens just as 'partake' groups and spoon-feed them. We know what happened in 1991. Our foreign exchange reserves were down and were not enough to pay for a week's imports. We were forced to pledge our gold stocks. Outside, our reputation was like throw mud at. The public distribution system, which we practiced, which was a recipe, which our friends from this side had suggested to the then Government headed by Smt. Indira Gandhi, led to an economy of shortages. Many of us will remember, Sir, there were queues for even vanaspati *ghee*, there was waiting period for sugar. Many of us will also remember that even coal was a ration commodity. We had to stand in a queue for everything right from a telephone connection, which used to be a big favour, to a scooter, to a car.

Sir, in 1991, Shri Narasimha Rao, of course from the Congress Party, became the Prime Minister. The situation in the world, by and large, had changed. The Soviet Union collapsed. The economic model, which our friend, Shri Sitaram Yechury, was just now pleading, collapsed. Sir, there was no moral justification, there was no motivation to continue with that model. And, as a result, Shri Narasimha Rao picked up a non-political person as his Finance Minister, who happens to be the Prime Minister today. I have absolutely no problem in sharing, with my colleagues here, a sense of pride. Beginning that period, Sir, we embarked upon a new path and, with the result, the potential of Indians which remained shackled for 40 years after Independence, was allowed to blossom and we see the result today and we find Indians doing well for themselves everywhere.

Mr. Chairman, Sir, planning is a continuous process. In fact, the good work done by one Government, naturally, gets passed on to the next Government. And, similarly, Sir, if there have been failures by one

Government, they have to be paid for by the successive Governments. Sir, we are discussing today three basic issues. The issues are agriculture, unemployment and poverty. In fact, we do divide the economy, Sir, in separate sections. But in this case, if you look at it carefully, all the three are overlapping. Sir, India is called an agricultural country and it is called an agricultural country not because of agriculture's contribution to the GDP or its contribution to the foreign trade, it is known as an agricultural nation because 55 per cent of our workforce is employed in agriculture. Sir, the situation in agriculture,, as has been very honestly brought out by the Mid-Term Appraisal, is really, really bad. In fact, Sir, if you see the growth performance in the first three years, Of the economy as a whole, it is averaging 6.5 per cent. It is clearly below the target of 8.1 per cent. Sir, growth in 2005-2006 is projected at 7.6 per cent. Even so, Sir, the average growth rate in the Tenth Plan period is likely to be below 7 per cent. We are short of the target of 8.21 per cent. Sir, to get an overall macro picture, I would like to go back to this document and I would like to quote from here. I quote from here, Sir. Sir, the Mid-Term Appraisal document on page 23 says, "The experience of the first three years of the Plan suggests that both the overall growth target as well as the agricultural sub-target will not be achieved and these targets for the Plan period as a whole have to be scaled down significantly even as efforts are made to improve performance in the last two years of the Plan. In such a situation the employment and poverty reduction objectives are also likely to slip and, therefore, a strong case for the measure that can mitigate the consequences of non-attainment of the targets." It further says, Sir, "Achievement of the Plan target is only possible if the GDP growth in the last two years averages nearly 11 per cent per year which is clearly infeasible on present trends." So, we have reached a situation, which is almost impossible. We have slipped from targets and there is no possibility of making up these targets in the remaining period. Sir, when we spoke of a target of 8.1 per cent of the overall growth implicating in it was a sub-target of agriculture that was of 4 per cent annual growth. Sir, this target of 4 per cent was fixed against a particular background of the period, from 1980 to 1996. In 15 years' period, the growth are of agriculture in India was 3.2 per cent. From 1996 to 2002, it dropped to 2.6 per cent. So, it has been falling down. Now in the first two years of the Tenth Five Year Plan, the rate of growth is further down to 1.35 per cent that is against

the target of 3.6 per cent. I come to the projection. Sir it is really alarming that projection for this year, 2004-05, according to this document, is just one per cent. So, with the result we started with 3.2 per cent from 1980 to 1996. We dropped to 2.6 per cent from 1996 to 2002 and the average rate of growth in the last three years is 1.3 per cent. So, when the of growth is down to 1.3 per cent, then we can imagine the state of agriculture, we can imagine the consequences that follow in terms of per capita availability of foodgrains, in terms of employment and in terms of poverty reduction in the rural areas. Sir, to know the reasons for this tardy progress, I would again like to go back to this document because the way this document has articulated the reasons for this tardy progress is really commendable. I quote from here Sir. Sir, it analyses the reasons and it says on page 188, "progress in implementing plan programmes in the first two years of the Tenth Plan was also slow. There was delay in starting new schemes meant to impart specific thrust to the Tenth Plan strategy. So far, the Department of Agriculture and Cooperation has started nine new Tenth Plan schemes" and it gives the details of the schemes and it says, further, "but none of these really took off." I repeat Sir, they list the nine appended schemes and then it says "but none of these really took off and total expenditure on all these during the first two years of the Tenth Plan was negligible." Now, Sir, who is responsible for neglecting these schemes? Who is responsible for not allocating sufficient money? The funds which have been allocated have not been used properly. Sir, the document further says, "more generally, the actual Plan expenditure of the Ministry of Agriculture during 2002-03 was only 27 per cent of the total Tenth Plan outlay, much less than the norm for the first two years. Only 31 per cent of the Plan outlay was budgeted during 2002-03 and 2003-04 and actual expenditure was 86 per cent of the budget amount." So, Sir, it is a clear case of neglect on the part of the Government of this vital factor. This, Sir, is not a supporter of the Government which is criticising this. It is not the Opposition which is saying this. This is a document which has been produced by the Planning Commission and which has been presented in this august House. Sir, as I said earlier, when employment opportunities failed, poverty increased. So, naturally, when there is very slow growth in agriculture, the employment has fallen and once the employment has fallen therefore, poverty definitely become more acute. Sir the neglect is further underlined by the National Accounts

Statistics. The Mid-term Appraisal document has quoted the NAS data which unfortunately is not updated but it says a lot and brings out the neglect of agriculture in details. Sir, these observations show the serious set back to agriculture from the Ninth Plan onwards. In fact, Sir, we were looking forward to a quantum leap in the Tenth Plan, but if you go by what the document has to say and I quote from page 189. It says, Sir, "There was deceleration in both livestock and crop sectors but more markedly for crops. Growth rates of livestock and crop output have averaged about 3.6 per cent and 1.1 per cent per annum respectively. Within the crop sector only fruits and vegetable, condiments and spices and drugs continue to grow at over 2.5 per cent per annum. Excluding these, growth rate of output of remaining crops fell below 0.5 per cent per annum after 1996-97, as compared to over three per cent earlier." So, Sir, there was a fall from 3 per cent rate of growth to less than half a per cent in the last three years. Growth of input used in agriculture also fell after 1996-97 to about two per cent per annum from over 2.5 per cent during 1980 to 1997 period. "...This occurred mainly after 1997-98..."—It says further—"... That this can be attributed to lower profitability leading to slower increase in input use. But, in addition, growth of input productivity (defined as difference between output and input growth) fell from about 1 per cent per annum prior to 1996-97 to negligible thereafter. During 1997-2002, agricultural prices declined relative to prices not only of inputs but also non-food consumer goods..."—lastly—"...National Accounts data on private consumption confirm this. Real per capita food consumption declined after 1998-99 despite fall in relative food prices. Per capita consumption declined absolutely in case of cereals, pulses and edible oils and its growth decelerated for all types of food, including fruits, vegetables and milk."

Mr. Chairman, Sir, we have a situation where the production is falling. The use of inputs is falling. The employment opportunities are falling. And, the per capita consumption of all these commodities has also come down. This is not something the critics of the Government, or, we sitting in the Opposition are saying. This is a document presented by the Planning Commission and made available to us.

We have pulses, oilseeds and cotton as the main cash crops. We have established the Technology Missions to improve the productivity of these crops and if you look at all the three crops, you will find that

there is one underlying message and the message is that, after the WTO recommendations were implemented, the imports were made easier. As a result, India has been, right upto 1970s, as far as agriculture is concerned, an export-surplus country. In the beginning, the ratio was almost 1:5. If we exported goods worth US $ 5, our import was worth only US $ 1. But, now, in the last fifteen years, thanks to easy import of many of the agricultural commodities, the ratio has come down to 2:2 and this ratio is falling further. Look at pulses, oilseeds and cotton. In fact, in the case of pulses and oil seeds, we have a very difficult situation because the poduction is stagnant and we are getting cheaper imports. The consumers are happy because they are getting cheaper imports. But, at the same time, it ensures, that the farmers don't get their due and the production has been stagnant in the case of pulses. In fact, the Mid-Term Appraisal of the Planning Commission has quoted the Commission for Agricultural Cost and Prices recommendation which says, "Although the Minimum Support Price of puises have been increased, recently to encourage technology adoption, it is the view of the Commission for Agricultural Costs and Prices that a sharp increase in imports has blunted this effort." So, reckless imports have finished our local farmers. In case of oil seeds, the Technology Mission was established sometime in 1986. In 1996-97, we produced 24.4 million tonnes of oil seeds. In 2001-02, the production came down by 4 million tonnes i.e., we produced just 20.7 million tonnes. In 2002-2003, the production dropped to 15 million tonnes from 24 million tonnes. The Technology Mission was in operation and the production had fallen down. For some reason, may be because of the good monsoon, there has been a turnaround and this year we can pat our backs and feel satisfied that we have produced again 25 million tonnes. But, if you look at it, even in 2003-04, when our production was good because of the good monsoon we were virtually at the same level at which we had started. In between, it dipped quite low. And, of course, the Government can claim that production has gone up from 15 million tonnes to 25 million tonnes. So, in terms of percentage it was a very, very impressive figure. But the fact is that duing the last ten years, we have continued to be where we had started from.

Sir, the most interesting story is in the case of edible oils. In 1984, we used to import only 10 per cent of our requirement. Today, we import

almost 50 per cent of our requirement. The result is that the farmers—since we import at very competitive prices—have no incentives to use the essential inputs. As a result, our production of edible oils is stagnant. In fact, the document says, "This calls for a fresh look at the working of the Technology Mission on Oilseeds and Pulses, which appear to be failing in its objectives".

Then, Sir, I come to 'cotton'. We are aware of the spate of suicides, which have taken place, by the farmers who have not been able to get remunerative prices for the work they had put in. And, the mills have been allowed to import all the quality cotton which they need. Maybe, they need it also. But the result is that we, as a country, who took prie in our cotton production, in the quality of our cotton textiles, are turning into a net importer, and our farmers are forced to commit suicides in large numbers. The new Government has come into power in Andhra Pradesh—I am not looking at this issue from the partisan point of view—but, unfortunately, even after the new Government came to power in Andhra Pradesh the distress among farmers continues to be there and the suicides continue to be rampant.

[MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN *in the Chair*]

Sir, I come to the problems that we face. Now, we have a document which has analysed the problems. It has analysed the problems in detail. But, do we have a political will to carry on with an exercise which will solve these problems? If you look at this document, there are a number of suggestions, and most of the suggestions are sensible suggestions. But, Sir, as the Government is structured today, it is dependent on this segment of 60 MPs left in Lok Sabha. Will it have the moral courage; will it have the political will to carry on with those measures which the document suggests to solve these problems? In fact, when I think of the Electricity Act, which the NDA Government had passed with the help of the Congress, which was in Opposition then, and the fate of the Bill, which it had met, I have my own doubts. In fact, the Electricity Bill, its passing and its implementation, holds the key to the solution of many of the problems because if you look at it, power empowers the poor; the power I am talking about is the electricity. And, the Electricity Act was notified on June 10, 2003. It contains enabling

provisions for the development of a competitive and efficient power sector. And, the reason, according to the document, why this has not been implemented, I quote, "There have been delays in operationalising the Act due to delays in finalising policies". But why have these policies not been finalised? Who is stopping the Government from finalising the policies? The Government has been in power for more than one year. This is a Bill passed in June, 2003. This was a Bill which was passed with the active help of the Congress. And the document further says "Reforms in the petroleum and natural gas sector through the dismantling of the Administered Price Mechanism (APM) have also not progressed as envisaged and real competition in the marketing of petroleum products is yet to emerge. The Coal Bill, 2000 aimed at amending the provisions of Coal Mines (Nationalisation) Act, 1973 and permit private sector in non-captive mining is pending in Parliament." It further says, "Serious weaknesses in the State Electicity Boards, especially, in the distribution segment, continue to plague the power sector and weaken its financial viability." Now, Sir,...

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: How much time would you like to take? Your party has only 30 minutes and you have already spoken for 25 minutes.

SHRI BALBIR K. PUNJ: Sir, give me two more minutes and I will conclude. Sir, there is this dilly-dallying. This document says that against the target of 41,110 MW, the maximum capacity addition in this Tenth Five Year Plan can be only 31,290 MW. That means, Sir, there is a shortfall of over 24 per cent. Sir, if you look at it, there has always been a mismatch in the growth of the economy, capacity addition and power generation by us. Between 1992-2004, power generation capacity grew at an annual rate of 4.16 per cent, while the GDP grew at 6.4 per cent. Sir, no economic progress can take place till you have sufficient amount of power. If you look at the problem of unemployment, agriculture, particularly, in the rural areas, and if you see the scenario, you will realise that most of the villages get power for 2-3-4 hours in a day. So, no economic activity is possible, no quality life is possible in the villages with the result that no industries can be set up. Even those who have the aptitude, even those who have the capital, even if raw material is available, even if market is available, it is just not possible for them to set up an industry in a rural area and provide employment to the rural

people because of the scarcity of power. In fact, if you look at the document, you will find that only 44 per cent of the rural households have power. Now, officially, Sir, we claim that out of 5,87,000 villages, 84 per cent of the villages are electrified. ...(*Interruptions*)...

SHRI DIPANKAR MUKHERJEE (West Bengal): Sir, is it his maiden speech? ...(*Interruptions*)...

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: No; no. he is utilising the entire time of his party. ...(*Interruptions*)...

SHRI DIPANKAR MUKHERJEE: Sir, is it his maiden speech? ...(*Interruptions*)...

SHRI BALBIR K. PUNJ: Sir, I have got half-an-hour. ...(*Interruptions*)...

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: No, no, Mr. Dipankar wants to know whether it is your maiden speech or not. ...(*Interruptions*)...

SHRI BALBIR K. PUNJ: So, you have a situation where though you claim that you have electrified 84 per cent of the villages, the number of households in the rural areas that have been electrified is less than 44 per cent. And, Sir, even that electrification is symbolic because of the simple reason that the electricity availability in most of these places is 3-4-5 hours, and, sometimes, you have a cluster of villages, which do not get any power for days together. So, no economic activity is possible.

So, I will call upon the Government to look at this document and ensure that whatever is needed to be done for the generation and distribution of power should be done, and only then can we address the problems of unemployment, poverty and also agriculture.

I would like to compliment those who have worked on this document and brought out this document. This is a very candid and an articulate commentary on the economy of the country and, in fact, in many ways, it is an indictment of the Government of the day. Thank you, Sir.

SHRI VAYALAR RAVI (Kerala): Mr. Deputy Chairman, Sir, this Mid-Term Appraisal is an honest evaluation of what happened in the last three years. Of course, the Tenth Plan is the successor of the Ninth Plan. Whether the Ninth Plan has achieved the targets or not, that is a different story altogether. I am not dealing with that, at the moment. Sir,

this Appraisal contains what happened during the last three years. Of course, there may be some suggestions, but this is an honest evaluation. Sir, before coming to the agriculture and food security, let me express my view on part number one, because it is necessary to look into this. Sir, on page No. 18, point 47 relates to change in labour laws. Sir, I fail to understand that a change in labour laws will make this country prosperous. I don't want to make a further comment on that. As regards this observation, as a strategy, which has been made in this Mid-Term Appraisal, I respectfully, disagree with this observation, especially, the portion, "it is a common complaint that our labour laws are much flexible than in other developing countries with whom we have to compete and this impedes our ability to exploit the full potential for tapping into the global market for labour intensive manufactured products as China..." Sir, India is not China. It is a democratic country of 100 crore people. Then, who makes complaints? Some big businessmen make complaints. So, I stop there. Let me, respectfully, disagree with that observation. I don't want to go into the FDI retail, but, as far as PSUs are concerned, I would say, 'yes' of course, I am happy that the Government has taken the decision ...(*Interruptions*)... The Government has taken a decision that is acceptable to all the sections of the people or the Members of this House, that is, especially the selling of shares. Sir, I do not want to deal with that. This Appraisal does mention something about the resources from sale of equity in profitable PSUs. But the Government itself is not inclined to accept the proposals contained in para 59; so, I do not want to comment on that.

Sir, the other issue which has been projected is agriculture and food security. As far as food security is concerned, I appreciate the honesty expressed in this evaluation, because it never boasted that we are achieving the targets. The targets could not be achieved. There are different reasons which have been explained. I appreciate that. There is one more point which does not find any mention in this Report. I must mention that. That is the population growth. The Planners are expected to know the fate of the planning. What happened after the Second Plan was mainly because of population explosion. Sir, in the First Plan, target was 1.2 per cent in population growth and they could fulfil the target only in the Second Plan. They were able to achieve the target in the Second Plan because the growth in population was somewhat near the

assumption. But, Sir, thereafter in 1951, it was only 36 crores or 360 million. In 1981, it went up to 680 million. So, the whole concept of planning, assumption of the GDP growth as well as the *per capita* GDP availability got derailed because of the population growth. Fortunately, I have gone through this Appraisal. I may be mistaken. But I cannot escape the issue of controlling population which is inevitable to reach the target, especially, the *per capita* availability of employment, or, the per capita availability of development and economic growth. I hope the Planning Commission will look into this aspect. Now, we come to the point which the hon. Member on the other side was mentioning about the will of the Government. I don't want to quote elaborately, but the target of the Ninth Plan could not be achieved, as far as the agriculture sector is concerned. So, naturally, when the allocation was made on the basis of the evaluation of the Ninth Plan, it came down beyond the expectation in the Tenth Plan. Sir, the two years of the Tenth Plan have also passed. The same party was in power. I do not want to bring politics into it. But when he said about some party, I would say his own party was in power for seven years, during the whole period of the Ninth Plan as well as two years of the Tenth Plan. That is the period during which the production had gone down below our expectation. From the target of 8.1 per cent, it has gone down to seven per cent or below that. I don't want to read all this. All this is here.

So, having said this, Sir, the point which has mainly come is, what is to be done in this regard? In the different areas of agriculture, namely, rice, wheat, etc., our production has gone down. Then, in the oil seeds, the production has gone down. In the field of cotton, the production has not only gone down, but it is facing a crisis. In all these areas, our agricultural production is facing this problem. So, we have to find a solution. The problem has already been explained here. Now, the solution has to be worked out. Sir, the Minister and the Planning Commission accept the importance of agriculture. Its importance is that it contributes about 33 per cent to the GDP of the country. The other thing is the work force. Sir, almost two-thirds of the rural population lives on agriculture. According to an earlier estimate, almost eighty per cent of the people who live below the poverty line are involved in agricultural labour or agricultural activities. Sir, I need not explain further that agriculture is the most important component of development of our country.

Sir, they have to provide food security also. They have to provide food security to our country. As far as food security is concerned, Shri Yechuryji has already said, and I don't want to quote it, that the *per capita* consumption has gone down. It has been even admitted in this Report. So, it is not because of non-availability. Sir, according to its own report, the food production has gone up, the stock has gone up. About 58 million tonnes of stocks have come. There was nobody to lift the stock. And when the Mid-day Meal Scheme came, the ICDS Scheme came, in addition, to two-three other schemes, there was some dilution of the stock. It means food production could achieve the target, and we can have enough stocks in the country. Now, the question before us is, how to sustain this production and make the *per capita* availability to the people. The question is, how to make it. The point is, how to increase the production, how to achieve the target. Sir, in this connection, I agree with the hon. Minister when he said that agriculture is a State subject. The States' contribution is important in this regard. States must contribute in it, and the effective intervention may be necessary from the Centre, from the Planning Commission, but the States have to take initiative in this matter. More efforts have to come from the State. Apart from whatever you do here, the irrigation projects which have been initiated in addition to other efforts that the Government is making, the States must contribute. Even though the Centre is making an effort in this regard, you cannot achieve the desired result. The Report itself mentions the problems they are facing in regard to irrigation because irrigation of thirteen million hectares of land could not be completed and the projects remained unfinished. According to this report, in fourteen million hectares of land, water could not reach to farmers' land because of silting, because the channel was not available and due to different problems. So, why it happens? Maybe, the priority of the State Governments changes. The political compulsion of the State Government may change the priorities. So, here, we need the intervention of the Central Government to see that the first priority should be to complete the projects which are incomplete. That is the most important priority. Why I am saying it is because we go on taking a number of projects one after another. These projects are enough to have, to produce more foodgrains, more rice or wheat, whatever it may be. But, unfortunately, it is lacking. Sir, the other thing he mentioned is regarding the diversification. Before talking about diversification, I would like to take research. The ICAR has made

a great contribution to our food production. They have contributed a lot in this regard. The Green Revolution is because of the ICAR's contribution. I don't belittle its importance. So, now, the question is, to what extent, we can contribute to do more and more research there. I hope the Minister will look into, and the Planning Commission must allocate more money to the State Agricultural Universities. In addition, the ICAR should be encouraged to see to what extent we can improve the quality and quantity of our production through more effective research. Sir, it has been admitted in the Report that as far as oil seeds are concerned, the technology mission has failed. If that is so, then look into other alternatives. Simply making a statement would not be enough. You must find some other method. Thus, most of the important products such as wheat, rice, oil seeds and cotton have been facing problems for the last seven years, during the Ninth Plan, and during the first two years of the Tenth Plan. This Appraisal has thrown light into these things and made us to think as to what is to be done.

Sir, the other point that I wish to make in this connection is about diversification. It was rightly mentioned about diversification by you—I shall quote the very important point that you made—agricultural diversification has to be a major element in accelerating agricultural growth and this calls for action on several fronts.' I fully agree with this. I can illustrate with an example. We, the people belonging to Kerala, are rice-eaters. Earlier, our production of rice was about fifty per cent. Studies made later have shown that it has come down to forty-nine per cent. That means that there is less production of rice. But, we could get enough rice from other States. So, we could diversify agriculture. But the mindset of the farmers needs to be changed. This idea needs to be sold to the State. Here, I would like to go one step further by talking about the States' initiative. The Planning Commission has begun with a pigeon-hole theory that they make programmes and projects. But here they do the planning and impose them on the States. This has been changing gradually, but, even today, the States have very little say in it. I was a Minister and I know how the States make plans. I know how departments submit a report or something like that, and how it reaches here. The whole strategy of planning needs to be changed. As of now, the planning is done at Delhi and then it goes to the States. But it has to come from the States to Delhi. While doing that, the process of diversification could be enforced and the States could be persuaded.

Sir, the States vary in their potential for producing different agricultural products. But everybody wants to produce rice. This is a matter that has to be considered by the State and the Planning Commission has to persuade the State for diversification. I feel that today, the Planning Commission has taken Centre-stage. Earlier, objections were raised on the plans only by Finance Ministry. Now there are two hurdles to be faced while clearing any project, one is the Finance Ministry and the other is the Planning Commission. But that is a different matter. What I am trying to say is that the strategy to be adopted by the Planning Commission needs to be changed. States need to take the greater initiative in the matter of attaining goals and the Planning Commission has to coordinate the process, rather than the Planning Commission controlling the entire planning throughout the country and making the States go by their diktats. This is the idea that needs to be considered by the Planning Commission, the Cabinet and the Government as to in what way we could change.

Sir, another important point is, the Report says that as far as the State Government is concerned, *license raj* has ended. Then, what has come in its place? The States have something very important, that is, freedom—freedom to attract more investment, freedom to attract more FDI and freedom to enhance economic development. Every State is competing with the other for economic development. That is a new phenomenon that we saw after 1991. That is a welcome phenomenon where the State has more freedom. So, when the State has more freedom and they are competing with each other, why can't they have the freedom to make their own plans within the framework of the total availability, and take greater initiative. This is one of the important developments of the twenty-first century, where the State has got the initiative of development.

Sir, the other important issue is that of food security. Food production has come down. It has come down to 174 million tonnes; a few years ago, it was 214 million tonnes. The target to be attained is 218 million tonnes. That target has to be met. So, why do we talk of this? That is because of the necessity for making food available to the poor. Here comes the PDS. I believe that the PDS has two aspects. One is that it is helping the poor . The second is that you could regulate the level of the purse. The PDS aims at two to three things. One of the targets is

subsidy. Well, that is a different matter. Here, it says, "Quite apart from PDS entitlement, this delivered an almost steady decline in real market prices of cereals over the 1970s and 1980s and rising per capital availability. Till 1977, the annual cost of the entire system was less than 0.5 per cent of GDP." They say that you have new Mid-Day Meal or the Employment Guarantee or the Food-for-Work Scheme, then why do you have PDS? It is entirely a different issue. Both are different issues. That is why I cannot agree with the observation of the Report. On page 196, the Report says, "With a decision already taken to introduce Employment Guarantee and expand Mid-Day Meals and the Integrated Child Development Service (ICDS), an alternative may be to move rapidly to full all-India coverage of these welfare initiatives and revert simultaneously to uniform PDS pricing and to the original clear-cut and much less expensive objective of stabilising prices at above costs of production." There is some contradiction. It is contradictory also. So, Sir, it is not possible. They say,"For example, the magnitude of food subsidy could be significantly reduced by fine-tuning the MSP of rice and wheat to the level of costs/market prices so that procurement remains close to the requirement of buffer stock as well as of PDS, thereby eliminating subsidy attributable to excessive carrying costs of stocks, export incentives and wastage." Sir, it is only an imagination. We couldn't agree to it because the PDS is one of the major social security missions. Yes, to what extent, you can contain it is a different matter. It can be discussed and intimated. But the onslaught on the PDS saying that it can only have drainage in the kitty of the Finance Minister is not correct. Yes, there is a drainage, otherwise from 4-5 per cent of the GDP we could have achieved more. So, we have to find out the methods to maintain the PDS which is also one of the major social security concerns. Sir, as you know the whole History—I do not want to go into History — there are 4 lakh fair-price shops in this country. I think, there are many more now. The PDS targeted beneficiaries were the BPL people. They are admitting in the Report that, yes, the people under BPL were made the APL. Then the Report admits that this whole exercise is for BPL and that introducing a new system of APL was absolutely wrong. But they say that it is automatically eliminated. Now, the suggestion made by the Mid-Term Appraisal is that the price of the PDS has to increase above either at the market price or procuring price or above that. It means that PDS will have no value. You can get rice

or wheat in the open market less than the PDS price according to this Report or this observation to which, Sir, I respectfully disagree. Lastly, this document, which I repeat, has thrown light on the problems which we are facing. This document makes suggestions. One suggestion is – which I am sorry I could not agree – "Re-examine fertilizer subsidies in order to improve the nutrient balance and also to target this more to smaller holdings, for example, through higher subsidy on fixed quantity per farmer." At least, there should be a simple agreement on the subsidy to farmers. Okay, you can find out different methods how to have fertilizers at reduced price to farmers, how to have water available to farmers. I am not speaking on water scarcity now. Sir, the water scarcity is a real problem. It is to be looked into. So, Sir, food security is very important. In agriculture, the State has to play a very important role. Motivate the States and ask them to have good relations with the Central Government. The Central intervention is necessary sometimes and so have it. Complete all the on-going projects, and make water available. Lastly, maintain the PDS system, maintain the food security and make the poor not to suffer but to enjoy. With these words, Sir, I conclude.

4.00 P.M.

*SHRI N. R. GOVINDARAJAR (Tamil Nadu): Mr. Deputy Chairman, Sir, I thank you for giving me this opportunity to take part in this important discussion. This august House, this hallowed precincts has the distinction of having been adorned by great leaders like the former Prime Minister Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru and the most popular Chief Minister of this sub-continent, the Hon'ble Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu Dr. Puratchi Thalaivi Amma. Sir, I wish to make some points in this august house of such great tradition. The great saint Vallalar said, Shun the company of those who speak something and nurture just the opposite, Seek the company of one who is forthright. Following this masterpiece of advice, I wish to make some suggestions. My intention is not to hurt anybody. My only concern is that the Tenth Five Year Plan should be successful. It has not been successful so far because of various factors. The former president of the United States, Araham Lincoln once said, 'Government of the people, by the people and for the people'. But today the situation is different. It is now 'Government of the party leader, for the party, leader and by for party leader'. John F. Kennedy said, 'Don't ask what

*English translation of the original speech delivered in Tamil.

the country has done for you, but ask what have you done for the country'. That should be the spirit of the rulers. But the rulers of the day ask only what the country has done for them. Our late lamented leader Dr. Puratchi Thalaivar MGR said 'coming to power is not just to wield authority but to serve the people'. I am sorry to say that the rulers today are interested only in arrogating power unto themselves. Yet another great leader, our late Dr. Anna said on the floor of this very house, I am very proud of saying that I come from a Dravidian stock. He also said, 'come to me if you wish to work, but not to enjoy'. However, this is not the situation today. Those in power today have come only to enjoy power and not to serve the people.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, because of the wrong policies and schemes of the Centre, we witness this kind of a situation in the country today. That is why we see poverty and unemployment everywhere. The prices of petroleum products including cooking gas and kerosene have gone up. This has resulted in the price rise of essential commodities. The prices of fertilizers and pesticides have also gone up. Levy of service tax has resulted in the increase of transportation cost. The hike in transportation cost has led to overall price-rise. Farmers are very badly affected because they have to pay more for fertilizers and pesticides. What is disappointing is the fact that the price of agricultural products has not gone up. This strange phenomenon has hit the farmers very hard.

Sir, this Government has struck a blow to the small-scale sector as well. Due to the removal of many items from the list of small-scale industry products, several small avocations are suffering. Those employed in these sectors have lost their livelihood. Lakhs of people have been rendered jobless resulting in unemployment in many parts of the country. Introduction of VAT has further aggravated the problem. Because of this tax, costs of raw materials have gone up. For example, iron is costing more and this has led to increase in the prices of agricultural implements like crow bar, spade etc. This has added to the woes of farmers who have already been denied long-term and soft loans.

Sir, what is the overall achievement? Failure in the agricultural sector and small scale sector has contributed to increasing poverty and unemployment. This makes me think of our great leaders who sacrificed

everything for the sake of the country. There was a time when principles were dear to the leaders. Now it is different. Money has become important to the leaders. I wish to quote what the great thinker Socrates said. He said don't believe what others say blindfolded. Apply your rational mind and decide. I appeal to you to pay heed to this. Our late leader Dr. Anna said, "The jasmine of the neighbour's garden too has fragrance". So, I appeal to you to listen to our views also. I am also sorry to say that today lawmakers break the law. This is the state of affairs now. The price rise of petroleum products, the fall in the growth rate of economy and foreign investment has worsened the situation.

Sir, I feel it my duty to say a few words about the Ministers. Principles are not important for the Ministers. Only comfort and luxury are important to them. There are 39 MPs in the Lok Sabha and 6 MPs in this House. But what all the 45 MPs did for Tamil Nadu. Did they try and succeed in getting Tamil Nadu its due share of Cauvery water. The great saint poet, Thiruvalluvar says in Thirukural:

"As the revolving world goes behind the plough,

It is supreme among professions"

Such is the greatness of farming. But what happened? Had they sincerely tried could they not have succeeded in getting Cauvery water from Karnataka? There are 45 MPs in them and 12 are Ministers, *(Interruptions)*

SHRIMATI PREMA CARIAPPA (Karnataka): Mr. Deputy Chairman, Sir, this is not *(Interruptions)*

SHRI V. NARAYANASAMY: Sir, what he is saying is not *(Interruptions)*

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Please sit down. *(Interruptions)*

SHRI N. JOTHI (Tamil Nadu): There is an interim order given by the Tribunal, which you do not want to respect. *(Interruptions)*

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Mr. Jothi, please take your seat. *(Interruptions)* Now the question is not there. *(Interruptions)* Why are you calling them. *(Interruptions)* The sivers are overflowing.

*SHRI N.R. GOVINDARAJAR: It they had said that they would withdraw support to this Government, would they not have acted and released water in Cauvery? Can't they fight for the people of their State who made them MPs and Ministers? Sir, I want to make a pertinent point. We talk of equality before law. I would like to ask whether that is followed by this Government. Sir, a function took place in Tamil Nadu. It was to give 40 thousand cell phone connections to people from the Southern States of Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Karnataka Andhra Pradesh and Pondicherry.

SHRI JAIRAM RAMESH (Andhra Pradesh): Sir, what is the relevance of all this?

SHRI V. NARAYANASAMY: Sir, he is unnecessarily. ...*(Interruptions)*

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Let us see how he co-relates it with the Mid Term Appraisal. *(Interruptions)* Mr. Narayanasamy, please sit down. ...*(Interruptions)*

SHRI V. NARAYANASAMY: Sir, in Tamil Nadu, there is an advertisement given by the AIADMK. ...*(Interruptions)*

SHRI N.R. GOVINDARAJAR: Sir, when a Government function takes place ...(Interruptions).*

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Mr. Narayanasamy, please ..*(Interruptions)*

SHRI N. JOTHI: Please, don't talk like that. *(Interruptions)* You are wrong. You are absolutely wrong ...*(Interruptions)*

SHRI V. NARAYANASAMY: Sir, the Tamil Nadu Government ...*(Interruptions)*

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Mr. Jothi, Please. *(Interruptions)* I was allowing him to see how he co-relates the advertisement with the Mid Term Appraisal ...*(Interruptions)*

SHRI BALBIR K. PUNJ: Sir, there are lot of words, but complete drought of thought ...*(Interruptions)*

SHRI N.R. GOVINDARAJAR: Sir, I want the house to know the conduct of the Ministers ...(Interruptions).*

*English translation of the original speech delivered in Tamil.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Please, don't show that paper *(Interruptions)*.

SHRI N.R. GOVINDRAJAR: Sir, it is a matter of protocol and tradition that ..(Interruptions)*.

SHRI V. NARAYANASAMY: He is making an allegation. ...*(Interruptions)*

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Mr. Narayanasamy *(Interruptions)*.

SHRI N. JOTHI: He is giving facts and figures *(Interruptions)*

SHRI V. NARAYANASAMY: He is ....*(Interruptions)*

SHRI N. JOTHI: I am sorry, Mr. Narayanasamy. Don't use these words. ....*(Interruptions)*

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Mr. Narayanasamy, he has a point of order. Let us hear the point of order.

SHRI VAYALAR RAVI: Sir, Rule 238A says very clearly, "No allegation of a defamatory or incriminatory nature shall be made by a Member against any other Member or a Member of the House unless the Member making the allegation has given previous intimation to the Chairman and also to the Minister concerned so that the Minister may be able to make an investigation into the matter for the purpose of a reply".

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Because he spoke in Tamil and nobody has understood it, I will look into it *(Interruptions)*

SHRI N. JOTHI: I followed, Sir, *(Interruptions)* I followed. ..*(Interruptions)*

SHRI VAYALAR RAVI: Sir, he has made an allegation by producing a paper here *(Interruptions)*.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: If he has made any allegation against the Minister, that will be looked into *(Interruptions)* Mr. Govindrajar, please conclude now.

*SHRI N.R. GOVINDRAJAR: Mr. Deputy Chairman, Sir, in the midst of those who have sacrificed everything for the sake of the country *(Interruptions)*

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*English translation of the original speech delivered in Tamil.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: I was wondering how it was very calm when he was speaking ...*(Interruptions)*

SHRI N. JOTHI: One example is more than sufficient *(Interruptions)*. One example is more than sufficient. *(Interruptions)*

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: I was feeling that the House was running very smoothly despite Tamil, but..*(Interruptions)*..Mr. Govindrajar, you please conclude now.

*SHRI N.R. GOVINDRAJAR: Sir, I have to say this in order to point out as to how the centre-state relation should be. *(Interruptions)*

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Mr. Narayanasamy, please stop *(Interruptions)*..

*SHRI N.R. GOVINDRAJAR: Sir, I am only referring to the protocol to be followed in such functions. I would like to ask whether Tamil Nadu is not on the map of India *(Interruptions)* Mistake is a mistake even if you show your third eye. *(Interruptions)*.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: That you can raise in a different way. But please confine yourself to the mid-term Appraisal of the Plan. It is very important. The country is watching how the Parliament is appraising the mid-term Appraisal. Please confine yourself to the mid-term appraisal. Please conclude now.

*SHRI N. R. GOVINDRAJAR: Mr. Deputy Chairman, Sir, I am speaking about a healthy relation. If health is lost something is lost, but if character is lost everything is lost. The code of conduct applies not only to the citizens but also to the Ministers. In fact Ministers should set an example for others to follow. Sir, I was referring to the function in Tamil Nadu. The photograph of the Hon'ble Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu was not carried. Is that justifiable?

Sir, once we were also in a coalition Government. Had we thought that power was dear to as, we too could have asked for more Ministers. But we did not. ...*(Interruptions)*.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Please conclude. You have taken 14 minutes against the allotted time of eight minutes to you. Kindly conclude now. Please conclude.

*English translation of the original speech delivered in Tamil.

*SHRI N. R. GOVINDRAJAR: Sir, we stood by our principles. We did only what we thought was good for the people. Many Hon'ble Members spoke here. I am reminded of the English poet William Wordsworth who said, "And Miles to go before I sleep, and miles to go before I sleep". But your days are numbered and the count down has begun. So, in the little time you are left with, try, to do something good for the nation. Concentrate on positive actions, then alone you can bring about another green revolution and eradicate poverty and unemployment.

SHRI RAVULA CHANDRA SEKAR REDDY (Andhra Pradesh): Sir, we have heard a beautiful language, that is, Tamil, when the Chair is occupied by a person from Karnataka. I come from Tamil Nadu.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: There should be no partiality on this basis.

SHRI RAVULA CHANDRA SEKAR REDDY: Since I have not informed the Interpreters' Branch, I prefer to speak in English. Sir, I thank you for giving me this opportunity to speak. I start with the words written in the Mid-Term Appraisal regarding agriculture while drawing the attention of the Minister for Agriculture. In the opening sentences itself, as far as agriculture sector is concerned, the Mid-Term Appraisal says that this requires a comprehensive re-examination of the agricultural strategy itself. The reasons are incorporated in the coming paragraphs.

Sir, we are all aware that agriculture is the backbone of our economy. In good old days, we used to say that 'agriculture was our culture.' Now, farmers are in distress. When I raised the issue of farmers' suicides in Andhra Pradesh, people countered my statement saying that it was concocted. But the other day, my esteemed colleague from the other side, Dr. M.S. Gill, made a Special Mention regarding farmers' suicides in the State of Punjab also. The plight of farmers is still continuing in Andhra Pradesh. The suicides so far counted are more than 3,000.

SHRI JAIRAM RAMESH: No. Absolutely not.

SHRI RAVULA CHANDRA SEKAR REDDY: Sir, I am pretty happy that farmers' suicides are stopped by them in this august House. But they are still taking place in Andhra Pradesh. The target for the Tenth Plan, as far as GDP is concerned, was 8.1 per cent. But after completing

*English translation of the original speech delivered in Tamil.

three years, it is only 6.5 per cent. The projected target during 2005-06, is about 7.6 per cent. Ultimately, they estimate that it will end up by 7 per cent, which is much below the expected target.

Sir, a list of priorities is given by the Government at Page No. 188 of the Report. They have given a lot of priorities. I would like to request the hon. Minister to add one more priority regarding the Report submitted by Shri Chandrababu Naidu as Chairman, Task Force on Micro-irrigation. The Government has accepted the Report. But, surprisingly, it is not in the priority list of the Government. He has extensively toured the country and submitted a detailed Report, which was accepted by the hon. Minister. He stated this while answering a question in the august House. I would like to draw the attention of the hon. Minister towards the Report submitted by Mr. Naidu.

The investment in agriculture is going down year after year. It was 15.4 per cent during 1980-81. Now, it is only eight per cent by the end of the Ninth Plan, that is, in the year 2001-02. It ended up with eight per cent. If you look into it in terms of actual allocations, it was Rs. 7,300 crores during 1980-81, and it is Rs. 4,658 crores in 2001-02. Instead of allocations increasing, they are drastically decreased. Sir, this is the state of affairs as far as agricultural investment is concerned ...(*Interruptions*)... We are reviewing the past performances only—that too, with the focus on the last three years.

Sir, I would like to draw the attention of the hon. Minister since I respect him very much. After his taking over in this Ministry, the things have slightly improved. I must compliment and I must congratulate the hon. Minister for this. Sir, as far as suicides of farmers in Andhra Pradesh is concerned, he has constituted a committee and he has asked an organization called MANAGE in Hyderabad to submit a detailed report. I am told that a report is submitted with the hon. Minister. I would like to know from the hon. Minister as to the action taken on the report submitted by MANAGE.

Sir, the most interesting part of this report is agricultural credit. Though there is an improvement in the agricultural credit, I agree that it is around Rs. 1,00,000 crore, but what is the percentage of loans given to the small and marginal farmers? Sir, people in the villages in rural areas are mostly illiterates, they are unable to get loans from the banks, more

particularly the rural banks. Sir, I would like to request the hon. Minister to show some interest towards the allocation of the Plan funds or the amounts from the banks to this sector, more particularly small and marginal farmers in the rural areas. They are still approaching the private lending people by paying higher rate of interest and thereby falling in the debt trap. Sir, you are aware and you also answered in this august House to a question that the rate of interest is very high since they are borrowing from the private lenders. That should be looked into. And the NPA, as far as the farming sector is concerned is much less that the industrial sector. Sir, when we are aware of all these facts, why we are not in a position to concentrate on agricultural credit as far as the small and marginal farmers are concerned? Sir, this is the most important aspect which is contributing to the list of farmer suicides.

Another thing is National Agricultural Insurance Scheme. Sir, I feel that it has not achieved the desired results. It needs a fresh look. Sir, we are aware that this scheme, the National Agricultural Insurance Scheme, was implemented during the NDA regime. Sir, since 50 per cent of the premium is borne by the Central and the State Governments as far as the small and marginal farmers are concerned, I request the hon. Minister that it should be increased to 90 per cent, if not the total. Since farmers in rural areas are not only unaware of this scheme, but they are also not in a position to pay the premium, the Government of India and the concerned State Government should share, to an extent of 90 per cent, so that it will help the poor, small and marginal farmers.

Sir, another aspect which is discussed in this report is agricultural inputs. Sir, we are aware of many news items all over the country regarding spurious pesticides and fertilisers, and the high rates of fertilisers and pesticides which are contributing to the investments. And since the investment is very high, the returns from the agricultural sector are very low and there is a mismatch. I request the hon. Minister to see that subsidies are increased as far as fertilisers and pesticides are concerned.

And there is a mention about organic farming. Sir, this is an interesting feature, but if you look at the allocation in the Tenth Plan, it is about Rs. 57 crores, if I am not wrong. This is a meagre amount; it's only a peanut, Sir when compared with the huge money and the huge budget

we are giving to various sectors, this agricultural sector is neglected. Hence, to encourage organic farming, the outlay should be increased and more allocation should be made. Sir, you are looking at me as if I should conclude. Sir, I will take two or three minutes.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: You, have taken more than the allotted time.

SHRI RAVULA CHANDRA SEKAR REDDY: Sir, the allied sectors of agriculture were also discussed. Sir I am having many points but I know the constraint of time. I am given only five minutes.

कृषि मंत्री तथा उपभोक्ता मामले, खाद्य और सार्वजनिक वितरण मंत्री (श्री शरद पवार): बोलिए, बोलिए।

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: The hon. Minister is interested to know about your points.

SHRI RAVULA CHANDRA SEKAR REDDY: Sir, the allied sector, like dairy, poultry and fishery were also discussed in this report. They have also requested the authorities to see that more meticulous planning is there as far as dairy and poultry sectors are concerned. Cattle and buffalo development is another subject which is dealt elaborately in this report. Due to paucity of time, I am unable to touch all these points.

Sir, another important aspect is the water management and irrigation projects. Irrigation projects are stuck up in the Government of India, whether in the CWC or in the Ministry of Environment and Forests. When the project is referred to Delhi, it is taking a lot of time, which is causing an escalation in the cost of the project. The money which is allocated originally for a particular irrigation project increases two or three times more than the original estimation. This is also contributing to the burden on the State exchequer.

The third subject which is being dealt here, apart from agriculture and poverty, is unemployment. With regard to poverty, there are many schemes in the Government of India, in the name of Rajiv Gandhi and so many other people. There are a number of schemes. In the NDA regime also, there were many schemes like PMGSY, Antyodaya Anna Yojana, so many schemes were there. Now, the Government has come up with a... *(Interruptions)*

SHRI JAIRAM RAMESH: What about Shir N.T. Ramarao?

SHRI RAVULA CHANDRA SEKAR REDDY: Shri N.T. Ramarao has given rice at Rs. 2/- per kg. Nobody in the country has given rice at this rate so far, and in future also, nobody will dare to give rice at this subsidised price. *(Interruptions)*

SHRI JAIRAM RAMESH: What about Shri Chandrababu Naidu? *(Interruptions)*

SHRI RAVULA CHANDRA SEKAR REDDY: Shri Chandrababu Naidu has given it at Rs. 3.50/- per kg., depending on the escalated cost. *(Interruptions)*

SHRI N. JOTHI: Sir, the hon. Minister knows it that in Tamil Nadu, under the PDS, we are giving rice at Rs. 2.50/- per kg. even today to more than 21 lakh card holders, the exact number comes to 1.50 crore people.

SHRI PENUMALLI MADHU (Andhra Pradesh): How many kgs. per head are you giving?

SHRI N. JOTHI: Twenty kgs per head, per month. What else do you want? ...*(Interruptions)*

SHRI RAVULA CHANDRA SEKAR REDDY: Sir, the Subsidy Rice Scheme during N.T. Ramarao's regime was costing Rs. 60 crore for the State. But after Chandrababu Naidu took over, he made it Rs. 3.50 paise per kg. But still, he incurred an expenditure of about Rs. 800 crores in a year. *(Interruptions)*. So far as the present Employment Guarantee Scheme is concerned, I have gone through the Bill, though it is coming up for discussion, and at that time, we can discuss it at length. But still, as of now, I would request the Government to see that it is implemented throughout the country. Your NCMP says that it will be implemented immediately, and all over the country. You are going back from your own commitment. The present thinking of the Government of India is to the extent of 200 districts, and in the coming five years, you are going to implement it in 600 districts, whereas, your commitment is for the implementation of the scheme all over the country with immediate effect. That is the commitment of the NCMP. Now, they have

gone back. That we will discuss elaborately during the passage of that Bill.

While coming to the employment sector, Sir, the employment in the organized sector, according to this report, has decreased. During 2001-02, 33.53 million unemployed people were there. During 2004-05, 36.36 million unemployed people were there in the rolls. This shows that unemployment is on the increase, and the Government of India's schemes which are contemplated here, and which are thrown into the States, are not at all meeting the needs of the people, and the allocations which are made under various schemes, SJRY, JRY and so many other schemes, the benefits of these schemes are not reaching the targeted people. There should be transparency, there should be accountability, and all these things should be taken care of.

Finally, I would like to request the hon. Minister for Agriculture to implement the Task Report of the Naidu Committee and to see that the irrigation projects are expedited expeditiously by the Ministry of Environment and Forests and by the CWC so that there is no cost escalation; and the National Agriculture Insurance Scheme should be simplified. With these words, I conclude. Thank you.

DR. RADHAKANT NAYAK (Orissa) : Sir, I have only one or two points to raise for your information and for the information of this august House. The Mid-Term Appraisal Document is a very fascinating document. It is more fascinating than the Tenth Five Year Plan Document itself. When you go through the entire Document, Sir, you will find that there is a 58-point road map that has been drawn up, and, irrespective of the Government in power, if you analyse what has happened during the last three years, you will come across that not much difference is there; maybe, some slight differences here or there, in emphasis or in the allocation of funds or in the analysis of failures that you have come across or of some successes wherever we have achieved. Sir, these basically remain the running theme of these two Documents. In any case, the Mid-Term Appraisal Document is dependent on the Tenth Plan naturally. There is not much of a radical departure, either in terms of content or in terms of nature or in terms of the detailed analysis. Most of the analysis follows, Sir, the traditional methods like the bureaucratic jargons. When you initiate a programme, they highlight with proper

jargons, and when they also analyse the failures and the successes, equally in a better language they can express. So, there is not much difference between these two Documents when you read, and one is, more or less, an extension of another. There is not much of a difference.

In any case, Sir, I would comment only on one or two things. I will not take you to the statistical portion of it. If you have gone through the last sentence of the Prime Minister's Address to the Planning Commission -- I will quote -- he says:

> "As a country, we have to learn to walk on two legs, one embracing processes of high growth and the other addressing the issues of redistribution and balanced development."

And he says again—

> "The former is essential to generate the resources for the latter."

Actually, Sir, this sums up the entire tenor, the entire objective of the Plan processes not only of the Tenth Plan, but, with equal vehemence, it also projects the same ideas. And also, the analysis, more or less, speaks in the same worth or in the same strength. Therefore, there is not much difference in-between the two if you go through this. But in any case, if you analyse the statement of the Prime Minister further, you will come across how long this society or this country will go on generating resources and when exactly the redistribution and the balanced development will come about. If you go through the performance of the Plan for the last three years, the inequalities are very, very perceptible, and even the imbalance between the States has also become very, very glaring. The richer the States, the more they are benefited; the poorer the States, with equal degree they have also lost. How long will we be able to measure the successes or the failures of the Plans and with what quantifiable indicators? To give an example, Sir, we readily accept the statistics given by growth. We have achieved growth rate only up to 6.5 per cent annually on an average. Unless we achieve, let us say, two digit growth rate in the next two years, we are not going to achieve the Plan targets at all, and in that context, Sir, when we are able to measure the growth, we are not able to measure with proper indicators, with proper parameters, the imbalances that are growing in our planned economy. Therefore, the results will have also to be properly

assessed with measurable indicators and parameters so that it will be possible for us to know how exactly and to what extent the country is facing an unequal society or what kind of inequality we will be facing in the days to come. Unless we lay equal emphasis on the imbalances, it will not be possible to have all-round growth of the country. I will quote Rousseau, the great philosopher, who said:

> "When, in a society, a few overtake many—like some States or some individuals—in riches, either the society decays or the State collapses."

That, perhaps, will be the scenario in our future. Take, for example, the greatest society, the American Society, which we always value in terms of a model for our emulation. Today, in America, there are more poor in the jails than in the universities. I am talking about the youths. When we analyse the Naxalite problem what it is today, we will find that it is not exactly for a separate country. Maybe, it is, or, maybe, it is not. It is more poverty, more inequality that has been giving rise to this Naxalite problem. Therefore, as we go along, there will be more violence. When there is more inequality, more violence will happen.

Sir, again I am harping on the fact that there is no difference between these two documents because there is not much difference between tweedledum and tweedledee. Ultimately, it will come to that. We are, more or less, accepting or have accepted the market economy in our country. In market economy, in a sense, there will be more inequality; there will be more private entrepreneurship; there will be more private sector role. As we go along, today's infrastructure, which we develop, will be some kind of a superstructure for creating more oppression or more inequality in the long run.

Sir, I will give some examples. I am going away from the nitty-gritty of the Plan Document that has been projected or the entire document that has been given to us. In 1990, there were 100 private corporations, which were registered, in the whole world. In 2003, only one survived. Similarly, in 1947, in our country, there were 50 registered private entrepreneurs or private companies or private corporations, and today we have only five which are surviving. Between 1990 and 1999, 50 corporations were registered and out of that 28 have disappeared. In other words, in a market economy, which is our driving force today, you

will find that corporations disappear over a period of time, but individuals become millionaires and millionaires. That kind of a scenario we are going to achieve.

[THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (PROF. P.J. KURIAN) in the Chair.]

Sir, in this 58-point road map that we have today, we find that the entire planning process has been, more or less, a top-down process. In 1931, we had, what is called, the village database. We had created the village database. In 1941, we had prepared some kind of a rudimentary village plan. My senior colleague in the party, Shri Vayalar Ravi, talked about the District Plans and State Plans. Today, if we go to the villages, we find that the villages are going nowhere. There is more stratification discernible than what was there earlier, both economically and socially, and we are harping on market economy and consumerism. But, at the same time, we have forgotten the self-sufficient villages, which were based on self-sufficient indicators. They are not in existence these days. Therefore, if one man comes out of the village or one Sarpanch becomes rich, it does not actually develop a village or a panchayat or a block. Therefore, the entire planning process, as has already been indicated, has to be reversed. We have to go into the block plan which was started in the Fifth and the Sixth Plans. They have been given the go-by. Therefore, on the basis of the village plan, block plan, district plan, on pyramidic structure, we have to build a national plan, which is totally missing. With the market economy coming in, the entire concept of human and social development has been, more or less, eclipsed. The document says that there has been an increase in the social sector; and the agriculture sector has been totally neglected. Of course, it is true because once we neglect the social sector, we automatically neglect the agriculture sector in villages. When we are harping on throwing the FDI to the retail sectors, you will find that the village entrepreneurs will be lost over a period of time. Every villager will be an employee of a multinational company. Therefore, the entire planning process being defective, the Appraisal Document, according to me, is equally defective. It does not show what has been said that we are starting the development with a humane face. It is not there. For example, if you go through the Human Development Indices, the physical quality of life, if you try to analyse the development aspect through that measurement technique, you will be aghast. We are not actually developing the way we should have been developing. In this background, the entire planning

process has to be altered redically. Only then it will be possible for us to match the growth with equity and social justice. Thank you.

श्री मंगनी लाल मंडल (बिहार): उपसभाध्यक्ष महोदय, दसवीं पंचवर्षीय योजना का शेष काल अब मात्र डेढ़ वर्ष रह गया है। सरकार के द्वारा मध्यावधि समीक्षा की गई और जून महीने में राष्ट्रीय विकास परिषद् की बैठक दो दिनों तक चली। प्रधान मंत्री जी ने आगामी विकास के लिए दो लक्ष्य निर्धारित किए हैं - समतामूलक समाज और विकासोन्मुख आर्थिक व्यवस्था हो, तद्नुसार आर्थिक ढांचा हो।

महोदय, यह जो पांच वर्षों में एक बार योजना की मध्यावधि समीक्षा होती है, तब सरकार को यह ज्ञान होता है कि किस क्षेत्र में हम पिछड़ गए हैं। प्रत्येक वर्ष जो वार्षिक योजना तय होती है सभी प्रांतीय सरकारों के लिए, प्रगति का मूल्यांकन नहीं होता है। जो आकार होता है योजना का और योजना आयोग जब वार्षिक योजना की सभी प्रदेशों के लिए स्वीकृति देता है, तो उसका दो-तीन बार रिवीज़न होता है, पुनरीक्षण होता है, संशोधन होता है और संशोधन और पुनरीक्षण इस मामले में होता है कि एक तो प्रत्येक राज्य सरकार को अपने जो संसाधन हैं, उनको जुटाना होता है और दूसरे, केन्द्र सरकार से, योजना आयोग से उसको सहायता और अनुदान प्राप्त होता है। उसमें जब कमी आती है और राज्य सरकार अपने साधन नहीं जुटा पाती है, तो अंत में योजना आयोग के द्वारा आकार का पुनरीक्षण करके जितना सरकार खर्च कर पाती है - दिसंबर, जनवरी, फरवरी में उसका आकार घटा दिया जाता है और प्रत्येक सरकार के लिए वही लक्ष्य निर्धारित हो जाता है। वह लक्ष्य नहीं रहता है, जो योजना आकार प्रत्येक राज्य सरकार के लिए तय होता है, स्वीकृत होता है। योजना आयोग ने इस बात को स्वयं कहा कि योजना आयोग नीतियां बनाता है, पैसा स्वीकृत करता है, पैसा देता है, केंद्र सरकार लागू नहीं करती है, राज्य सरकारें लागू करती हैं। अब राज्यों में कई समुन्नत राज्य हैं, बहुत सारे राज्य पिछड़े हैं, कुछ अति गरीब राज्य हैं और जो पिछड़े हुए हैं कुछ क्षेत्रों में, बेरोजगारी बढ़ी है, कृषि क्षेत्र में जो ह्रास हुआ है, वह सिर्फ गरीब प्रदेशों में नहीं हुआ है, पिछड़े राज्यों में नहीं हुआ है, बल्कि सभी प्रदेशों में हुआ है। इसीलिए मेरा पहला सुझाव यह है कि यह सरकार 11वीं पंचवर्षीय योजना का एप्रोच पेपर तैयार करने जा रही हैं जब 11वीं योजना का दृष्टिपत्र तैयार होगा तो सरकार ने दसवीं पंचवर्षीय योजना में जो कमियां पाई हैं, उन्हें दूर करे। जो मध्यावधि समीक्षा हुई है, उसमें तीन कमियों की ओर इशारा किया गया है, कृषि क्षेत्र में ह्रास हुआ है, कृषि का जो उत्पादन हुआ है, उसमें कमी हुई है, सामाजिक क्षेत्र में और शिक्षा के क्षेत्र में हम पीछे गए हैं। जो लक्ष्य रखा गया था, उससे आगे नहीं गए हैं। दोनों के मामले में जो तीसरा कारण माना है, यह कहा कि हमारा ढांचागत स्वरूप है, आधार है और आधारभूत संरचना है, हमारी वह आधारभूत संरचना मुकम्मल नहीं है, पूरी नहीं है। यानी सड़क नहीं है, परिवहन नहीं है, बिजली नहीं है और सिंचाई नहीं है,

तो मुख्य रूप से ये तीन कारण गिनाए हैं। महोदय, कृषि के बारे में सभी लोगों ने चर्चा की है। यह ठीक है कि कृषि में खाद्यान्न का जो उत्पादन होना चाहिए था, जो हमारा लक्ष्य था, वह पिछले तीन वर्षों में, 2002 में, जब दसवीं पंचवर्षीय योजना लागू हुई, तो उसके बाद से लगातार तीन वर्षों तक खाद्यान्नों के उत्पादन में कमी होती गई। 1980-81 से 1995-96 के बीच कृषि क्षेत्र में खाद्यान्नों में जो वृद्धि दर 3.2 प्रतिशत थी, वह घट गई। दसवीं पंचवर्षीय योजना के प्रारंभिक तीन वर्षों में वह 1.9 प्रतिशत पर आकर ठहर गई है। अब यह सरकार चेती है और कहा है कि यह जो ह्रास है, डेढ़ वर्ष में, आगे दो वर्ष में हम इसमें आगे कार्यवाही करेंगे और विकास करेंगे। हम यह मानकर चलते हैं और हमारा यह विश्वास है कि जो हमारे माननीय कृषि मंत्री जी हैं, कृषि के मामले में इनको सिर्फ बहुत ज्यादा ज्ञान ही नहीं हैं, बल्कि उनका कनविक्शन है कि देश की अर्थ-व्यवस्था तब तक मजबूत नहीं हो सकती है, जब तक कृषि को आधारभूत स्वरूप नहीं दिया जाता। महोदय, गरीबी, बेकारी और असमानता, तीनों बढ़ी हैं। आज देश में दौलत बढ़ रही है। हम कह रहे हैं कि हम बहुत विकासशील देश हैं। दुनिया में हमारा नाम हो रहा है कि हम एक शक्ति बन रहे हैं। लेकिन देश में दौलत भी पैदा हो रही है। दौलत के साथ-साथ देश में विकास भी हो रहा है, लेकिन जो गरीबी है, यह बढ़ रही है। इस कारण हमारी जनसंख्या एक अरब तक पहुंच गई है। इसमें तीस करोड़ से ज्यादा लोग गरीबी रेखा से नीचे हैं। महोदय, गरीबी रेखा से नीचे कौन है, जिनको मानवीय जीवन जीने के लिए कोई सुविधा प्राप्त नहीं है। मानवीय जीवन में रोटी, कपड़ा और मकान, चिकित्सा और शिक्षा है। ये जो पांच मूलभूत सिद्धांत हैं, इनके आधार पर जब तक सरकार विकास के लिए कदम नहीं उठाएगी, तब तक न तो गरीबी दूर होगी और न रोजगार कम होगा। रोजगार की स्थिति यह है कि 2001-2002 को आधार वर्ष माना गया है, जिसमें 8.87 प्रतिशत के हिसाब से बेरोजगारी बढ़ रही है। यह जो दसवीं पंचवर्षीय योजना की मध्यावधि समीक्षा हुई है और इसके बाद जो परिणाम आया है, 2004-2005 में यह बेरोजगारी बढ़कर 9.11 प्रतिशत हो गई है। बेकारी भी बढ़ रही है, गरीबी भी बढ़ रही है और अमीरी और गरीबी के बीच में दौलत की खाई पैदा हो रही है। यह जो अमीरी और गरीबी के बीच में खाई बढ़ रही है, इस खाई को पाटना होगा। राज्यों के बीच में जो गैर बराबरी बढ़ रही है, योजना बनाते समय इस बात को भी देखना होगा। महोदय, यहां पर इस बात पर भी चर्चा हुई है कि राज्य की जो फिसकल पॉजिशन है, उसके लिए केन्द्र से अनुदान मिलता है, सहायता मिली है और ऋण मिलता है। जो गरीब राज्य है, उसके लिए दिक्कत होती है। राज्यों से 11 या 12 प्रतिशत के हिसाब से ब्याज लिया जाता है। जिन राज्यों के पास ज्यादा रिसोर्सेज नहीं हैं, हम बिहार से आते हैं, बिहार में ज्यादा रिसोर्सेज नहीं हैं। जो रिसोर्सेज थे वे झारखंड में चले गए। केन्द्र सरकार से जो हमें ऋण मिलता रहा है या अन्य राज्यों को ऋण मिलता रहा है, उसमें 12 प्रतिशत के हिसाब से ब्याज लिया जाता है। सरकार

ब्याज देने में पैसा लगा देती है, योजना पर खर्च करने के लिए सरकार को पैसा नहीं मिलता है। इसीलिए दसवीं पंचवर्षीय योजना का सबक लेकर हमारा दूसरा सुझाव होगा कि ग्यारहवीं योजना के लिए सरकार जो एप्रोच पेपर तैयार कर रही है, जो दृष्टि पत्र तैयार कर रही है, उसमें ऋण का प्रतिशत घटाया जाना चाहिए। राज्यों पर, जो गरीब राज्य हैं, उस पर ज्यादा आर्थिक बोझ न पड़े, अपने इंटरनल रिसोर्सेज जुटाने में कामयाब हो जाए, इस दिशा में कार्रवाई करनी चाहिए। महोदय, जो समीक्षा हुई है, समीक्षा में सात क्षेत्रों को चिह्नित किया गया है, जिन सात क्षेत्रों को चिह्नित किया गया है महोदय, एक बात है, सिर्फ कृषि के मामले में, कृषि में सिर्फ खाद्यान्न, तिलहन और दलहन, इन चीजों की चर्चा हुई है, लेकिन कृषि के साथ-साथ एग्रीकल्चर की जो एलायड एक्टिविटी है, जब तक हम एलायड एक्टिविटी पर ध्यान नहीं देंगे, तब तक कृषि का समेकित रूप से संपूर्णता में विकास नहीं हो सकता है। खाद्यान्न की कमी होती जा रही है। यह ठीक है कि हमारे पास बफर स्टॉक है, लेकिन एग्रीकल्चर के साथ-साथ जो एलायड एक्टिविटीज हैं, एलायड एक्टिविटीज पर सरकार के द्वारा ध्यान नहीं दिया जाएगा, कृषि के क्षेत्र में समुचित विकास और त्वरित विकास हो सकता है। मैं जानता हूं कि आप समय के बारे में कहना चाहते हैं। इन्हीं बातों के साथ मैं अपनी बात समाप्त करता हूं।

उपसभाध्यक्ष (प्रो॰ पी॰ जे॰ कुरियन): प्लीज कन्क्लुड।

श्री मंगनी लाल मंडल: अपनी बात समाप्त करते हुए कहना चाहता हूं कि जो कमियां दसवीं पंचवर्षीय योजना में रही हैं, इलेवन्थ फाइनेंस कमीशन में, इलेवन्थ योजना में, ग्यारहवीं योजना में उन्हें दूर किया जाना चाहिए ताकि जो फिस्कल पोजीशन है, उसमें गरीब राज्यों को अपनी योजना लागू करने में सहूलियत हो सके। धन्यवाद।

श्री सुरेश भारद्वाज (हिमाचल प्रदेश): उपसभाध्यक्ष जी, इस महत्वपूर्ण चर्चा में भाग लेने के लिए अवसर देने के लिए मैं आपका धन्यवाद करता हूं। दसवीं पंचवर्षीय योजना का मध्यावधि मूल्यांकन योजना आयोग द्वारा भी किया गया, कैबिनेट और नेशनल डेवलेपमेंट कौंसिल ने भी इस पर अपनी मोहर लगाई है। मध्यावधि मूल्यांकन में अर्थव्यवस्था की जो स्थिति उजागर हुई है, वह मिली-जुली बताई गई है। ऐसे बहुत से क्षेत्र हैं, जिनमें इस पंचवर्षीय योजना की मध्यावधि में देश ने बहुत उन्नति की है। मैन्युफैक्चर सेक्टर में, बायोटेक्नोलॉजी में, फार्मास्युटिकल, ऑटोमोबाइल में भारत ने इस पीरियड में बहुत उन्नति की है। इसी डॉक्यूमेंट में कुछेक दुर्बलताएं भी लक्षित की गई हैं, जिनमें कृषि ढांचागत व्यवस्था का न होना, सामाजिक क्षेत्र में कमी, इस प्रकार के बहुत से बिंदु मध्यावधि मूल्यांकन में योजना आयोग ने दर्शाए हैं। उपसभाध्यक्ष जी, जब यह दसवीं पंचवर्षीय योजना प्रारंभ हुई थी, तब इसका जी॰डी॰पी॰ का टारगेट 8.1 परसेंट था। मध्यावधि मूल्यांकन में तीन वर्षों के कार्यकाल में 6.5 प्रतिशत तक दर्शाया गया है। आने वाले समय में योजना आयोग के उपाध्यक्ष तथा प्रधानमंत्री जी द्वारा यह

लक्ष्य 7 प्रतिशत तक का रखा गया है। यह सच है कि कृषि के क्षेत्र मे बहुत वर्षों से कमी आती जा रही है और 1971 में ''गरीबी हटाओ'' का नारा लगने के बावजूद भी आज गरीबी बढ़ती जा रही है। इसके साथ-साथ जो बेरोजगारी बढ़ रही है, उसके कारण हमारी जी॰डी॰पी॰ के बढ़ने में मुश्किलें आती जा रही हैं। हालांकि इस दसवीं पंचवर्षीय योजना में, जो 6.5 प्रतिशत रहा है, नौवीं पंचवर्षीय योजना के 4.5 प्रतिशत औसतन से अधिक है, लेकिन फिर भी मैं समझता हूं कि यह नाकाफी है। मध्यावधि मूल्यांकन में इस पंचवर्षीय योजना की जो समीक्षा की गई है, उसमें बहुत सारे उपाय भी सुझाए गए हैं। यह इस पंचवर्षीय योजना का चौथा वर्ष चल रहा है और जिस प्रकार के उपाय सुझाए गए हैं, लगता नहीं है कि इस पीरियड में उन उपायों से कुछ काम बन पाएगा। कुछेक काम ऐसे हैं, जिनको सरकार भली-भांति कर सकती है। दो कानून हैं, जिनमें अमैंडमेंट्स लाने हैं, जैसे इसैंशियल कमोडिटीज़ एक्ट में बहुत से प्रावधान सुझाए गए हैं, लेकिन लगता नहीं है कि कोई राजनीतिक इच्छा शक्ति है कि उसको पूरा किया जाए। मैं माननीय सीताराम येचुरी जी के कुछेक सुझावों से सहमत हूं कि कृषि में सब्सिडी को कम करने की बात की जाती है, लेकिन जैसा यहां पर सभी ने बताया है कि फार्मर्स लोग सुसाइड कर रहे हैं, कृषि के क्षेत्र में ह्रास हो रहा है, कृषि अब एक ऐसा व्यवसाय समझा जाने लगा है, जिसमें कोई लाभ नहीं होता है, इसलिए न तो लोग कृषि को बढ़ावा देना चाहते हैं, न ही कृषि के क्षेत्र में कोई रिसर्च हो रही है कि हम अपनी क्रॉप्स का डाइवर्सिफिकेशन करें। इस दृष्टि से कुछ सुझाव इसमें दिए गए हैं, जिन पर अमल किया जाना चाहिए। कुछ ऐसे सुझाव हैं, जैसे कि कृषि के क्षेत्र में सब्सिडी कम की जाए और दूसरे क्षेत्रों में सब्सिडी बढ़ाई जाए। साथ ही साथ फर्टिलाइज़र्स में बदलाव करना उचित है, लेकिन कृषि के क्षेत्र में फर्टिलाइजर्स पर जो सब्सिडी दी जाती है, उसमें दिन-प्रतिदिन कमी आती जा रही है और फर्टिलाइजर्स की कीमतें दिन-प्रतिदिन बढ़ती जा रही हैं। इसके कारण निश्चित रूप से कृषि के क्षेत्र में ह्रास होता जा रहा है। कृषि के क्षेत्र में जो एवरेज रहा है, वह 1.3 तक पहुंच गया है। इसको जब तक बढ़ाया नहीं जाता है, तब तक जो जमीनी हकीकत है, जो आम जनता है, आम व्यक्ति है, उसको हम विकसित नहीं कर सकते हैं।

उपसभाध्यक्ष महोदय, इसी दृष्टि से हमारी जो ढांचागत व्यवस्थाएं हैं, वे बहुत कम हैं। बिजली के क्षेत्र में, सिंचाई के क्षेत्र में, सड़कों के क्षेत्र में और पिछली सरकार द्वारा स्वर्णिम चतुर्भुज सड़क योजना और कृषि के क्षेत्र से जुड़ी हुई जो ढांचागत व्यवस्था योजना है, प्रधानमंत्री ग्राम सड़क योजना है, पिछले एक-डेढ़ वर्ष से यह देखने में आया है कि उसका काम शिथिल पड़ता जा रहा है। प्रधानमंत्री ग्राम सड़क योजना, प्रत्येक गांव को मुख्य सड़क से जोड़ने के लिए बनाई गई थी, ताकि उसके कारण जो हमारे किसान हैं, उनका अनाज मंडियों तक सुगमता से और सस्ती दर पर पहुंच सके। इसको बढ़ाए जाने की आवश्यकता है, लेकिन पिछले एक वर्ष में इसमें जो कमी आई है, उसको सुधारने की आवश्यकता है।

5.00 P.M.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (PROF. P.J. KURIAN): Please try to conclude.

SHRI SURESH BHARDWAJ: Yes, I am trying to conclude. I know my time has been taken by...

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (PROF. P.J. KURIAN): No; you had no time. Your party had 30 minutes. It is only the extra bonus.

SHRI SURESH BHARDWAJ: Sir, I have just one point to make. यह जो आधारभूत ढांचा है, इसको ठीक करने की जरूरत है। 1950 में गवर्नमेंट के रेजोल्यूशन द्वारा प्लानिंग कमीशन बनाया गया था। इसके बाद 10 पंचवर्षीय योजनाओं पर काम होता रहा है। जब यह प्लानिंग कमीशन बना था और ये पंचवर्षीय योजनाएं बननी आरंभ हुई थीं, उस समय इस देश की अर्थव्यवस्था एक बंद अर्थव्यवस्था के रूप में जानी जाती थी, हिन्दुस्तान में closed economy थी, लेकिन आज जो मुक्त व्यापार की व्यवस्था हुई है, आज जो economy मुक्त हुई है, उसमें इस प्लानिंग कमीशन की जिस प्रकार की कार्य-प्रणाली है, जिस प्रकार से काम हो रहा है, इसके औचित्य पर भी प्रश्नचिह्न लग जाता है। मैं समझता हूं कि इसीलिए माननीय प्रधानमंत्री जी ने भी यह कहा है कि ...(व्यवधान)...

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (PROF. P.J. KURIAN): Please try to conclude.

SHRI SURESH BHARDWAJ: The Prime Minister aired his views to say that "the Planning Commission has played a historic role in our development and to be a cornerstone of our federal structure. It has to be a think-tank and reservoir of research for the Government. It should be responsive to the changing world and to the winds of intellectual enquiry and debate." माननीय उपसभाध्यक्ष जी, मेरा सुझाव है कि प्रधानमंत्री जी ने जिस प्रकार की बात की है कि जिस प्रकार चीन ने अपनी इकोनॉमी बदलते हुए वहां पर 'कमीशन फॉर इकोनॉमिक रिफॉर्म्स एंड रिस्ट्रक्चर' बनाया है, उस प्रकार हिन्दुस्तान में भी ये सारी जो पंचवर्षीय योजनाएं हैं, इनकी मध्यावधि समीक्षाएं हैं, इनकी जो कार्य-प्रणाली है, इसे आज की वर्तमान व्यवस्था के अनुसार बनाने की आवश्यकता है और इस दृष्टि से काम होना चाहिए। आपने मुझे समय दिया, आपका बहुत-बहुत धन्यवाद।

SHRI SHARAD ANANTRAO JOSHI (Maharashtra): Thank you, Mr. Vice-Chairman, Sir Shri Sitaram Yechury has opened the discussion on the Mid-term Appraisal of the Tenth Five-Year Plan with special

reference to agriculture, poverty and unemployment. Shri Yechury's reputation had preceded him, and we were all listening to his maiden speech with rapt attention. He did not disappoint us like Lakshman from Andhra Pradesh, from where he comes, from his original State, scored a century in the very first appearance, and like Pankaj Roy from Bengal, from the State that he represents, he again scored a good century. But he set a very high technical level in the debate, like an EPW article referring to a number of statistical tables, graphs, footnotes and quotations, and probably as a result, those who followed him were forced to keep that kind of a level, often quoting statistics, of which the origin they did not know. As a professional statistician I am going to demystify the whole debate by stating it in a simple way.

The Mid-term Appraisal says this: That the Indian batting is on; the first six wickets have fallen, and required run-rate is so high that we are unlikely to make it and the match is as good as lost. This was the Mid-term Appraisal! At the end what we might say would be a post-mortem of the Tenth Five-Year Plan. That briefly is the समझ।

Everybody agrees that as regards agriculture, poverty and unemployment, the diagnosis is exactly the same and it is music to my ears to see a comrade expressing sympathies with the farmers, for whom generally they do not express any sympathy. But having agreed on diagnosis, the prescription can be quite different. The Left has a standard prescription for all rural problems; it is land-reforms, employment guarantee and public distribution system. These are the standard prescriptions. There is a Sanskrit verse. If you permit me. I will quote it:

वैद्याः वदन्ति कफपित्त ऋद्धविकारान्
ज्योतिर्विदाः ग्रहगतिं परिवर्तयन्ति।
भूताभिषंग इति भूतविदो वदन्ति
प्राचीनकर्म बलवन्मुनयोः वदन्ति।

If you go to a Vaidya, he will say that your disease is on account of *kapha, pittha or vayu*. If you go to a *Panchakshari*, then he will tell you that this is because of some ghost haunting you. If you go to an astrologer, he will turn the planets to explain your situation. And, if you

go to a *Rishi*, he will say that it is the fruit of your *karma* of the past births.

Similarly, whatever the situation, the Left thinkers would invariably put out their Pet Plan. If it were harmless, I would not have really even asked for floor. But I want to submit very humbly that the three things that they prescribe are positively harmful, number one, he said that subsidy should not be reduced; he said that the PDS should be even more generalised; and, he said that the EGS should become the main factor.

Now, I want to talk only on these three points, possibly giving 2-3 sentences each. Number one, as far as subsidies are concerned, the hon. Minister for Agriculture is here, the Minister for Commerce, the other day in this House admitted that even on way to Hong Kong, the situation in India is that Indian agriculture still suffers under negative Aggregate Measure of support, calculated in any manner it comes to the some point, as many members said, that the Indian farmer is not able to meet the cost of production with the income that he gets. That basically is the negative subsidy. If that is so, then it is quite clear that there is no question of either reducing the subsidies or increasing the subsidies because the Indian farmer has a negative subsidy as it is. But I do not think that Communists have ever accepted that Indian farmers have a negative subsidy. ...*(Interruptions)*... You have not accepted that. ...*(Interruptions)*... Even the WTO document says it you would not accept it. ...*(Interruptions)*... When it comes to the Employment Guarantee Scheme, if the Employment Guarantee Scheme were that good—hon. Sharad Pawar who was Chief Minister of Maharashtra for so many years, has been there—EGS has been working in Maharashtra for 30 years and that has not given any of the beneficial effects that you have mentioned here. Surprising thing is that a comrade for once, even though you do not accept, has suddenly gone for a Keynesian prescription of introducing liquidity to dig and fill work programme.

[MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN *in the Chair*.]

If what is required in the agriculture is not a demand side economics but a supply side economics, his prescription of EGS is entirely wrong.

Similarly, PDS, in fact, if you have to go the other way round and rather than have a hackneyed system of public distribution, which since 1951 Dr. Rafi Ahmed Kidwai had recommended abolition of that, if we abolish it altogether, the Indian agriculture is likely to be much better off because the supply side will be strengthened. The effect of the EGS, I will come to this point at the time of discussions of Employment Guarantee Bill the result is if you give sixty rupees, and in Maharashtra that situation even exists today, people get paid for not doing any work at all merely because the registers are filled in by some officials. If they get sixty rupees for not doing any work, then the labour is unwilling to go to the field for doing the regular days agricultural work with the result that the normal agricultural labour market is adversely affected and that has been a bane for agriculture in Maharashtra. When you will discuss the EGS in a couple of days coming. I will talk at greater length on that subject. So, everybody is agreed that Indian agriculture is under distress. We do not need to have the statistics and the tables of the Planning Commission for that. In the last three years, over 15,000 farmers have committed suicide and shown what kind of distress the Indian farmers are in. Having agreed to that, if now the Leftists who have always made a wrong prescription for Indian agriculture or for agriculture anywhere, now take the situation in hand again and try to push the Indian agriculture in a wrong direction that would really be a tragedy. I hope by my speech I have at least started the motion to move the other direction. Thank you very much.

SHRI DIPANKAR MUKHERJEE: What is his perception? ...*(Interruptions)*...

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: He will tell it later. ...*(Interruptions)*...

SHRI JAIRAM RAMESH: Do not follow the Left, that is his perception. ...*(Interruptions)*...

SHRI N. JOTHI: It is good that he could understand that. ...*(Interruptions)*...

SHRI JAIRAM RAMESH: We understood clearly. ...*(Interruptions)*...

SHRI SHANTARAM LAXMAN NAIK (Goa): Sir, I stand here to participate in his Short-duration Discussion on the Mid-Term Appraisal of the Tenth Five Year Plan. Sir, we consider education as one of the primary factors or instruments of eliminating poverty from this country. I

remember when I was a Member of the other House 15 years back; Rajivji took initiative to have the New Education Policy of 1986. Before framing the Education Policy of 1986, there was a discussion in the House. There was a discussion on the Draft Policy and there was a discussion on the Action Taken Report on Education. Therefore, there were three major debates on education itself in the House in five years' term because it was considered as a major instrument for the purpose of alleviation of poverty in the country. Now, we had set a target that by 2003 all children should go to school. Obviously, we have not been able to achieve that target. Now, the question arises how to make education compulsory in the country. In many States, even in my own State, not only education has been made compulsory but there is also a law which governs and states that if parents do not send their children to school, they are liable to fine. I do not advice other States. I do not know whether it is an ideal thing. But we have gone to such an extent because we consider this as a major instrument of poverty. Then a question arises, Sir, if we consider the elimination of power as an important responsibility of the Government of India like Defence — then this is my humble opinion, others may not agree or there may not be many takers for this; if this is the major responsibility of the Government of India — then the subject has to come in the Union List. There is a demand to go to the State List. I would rather speak the other way that if we consider this as the major responsibility of the country, then, a thought has to be given whether the subject has to come in the Union List or not. Sir, we have set a target that by this Plan 75 per cent of our population will be literate. It is a good percentage. If we are going to achieve this by the end of this Plan, it will be a miracle. if that is so, then all of us have to work hard. Secondly, if we have to eliminate poverty, have progress in all the fields, then, devolution of power in Panchayat body is a must. We have not still achieved the target of 73rd and 74th amendments. Our State Governments are reluctant to give powers whether to the Municipal bodies or to the Panchayat bodies. I do not know whether Mani Shankar Aiyarji is dare enough to make it mandatory, by some sort of Constitutional amendment, all such mandatory powers come to the Panchayat bodies. Secondly, if we really want Central schemes to be implemented by the State Government, then, this is the only way of chanellising our Centrally sponsored schemes through the Panchayat bodies so that Panchayat also gets

power and our targets are also achieved. Thirdly, infrastructure is an important item, as far as achieving our target is concerned. Even Mid-term Appraisal says that infrastructure inadequacies are a major factor constraining Indian growth. If that is so, then we have to give importance to the transport facilities. The projects that we have undertaken like NHDP, as far as Golden Quadrilateral is concerned, we are aware that we are behind schedule. Why is it behind schedule? There are various factors and one of the factors -- with due apologies to some Members -- one of the important factors why it is behind is that...*

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: No, no, this will not go on record.

SHRI SHANTARAM LAXMAN NAIK: I have not named anybody. Therefore, there are hurdles in the way. Now Phases two and three will be taken up by the Government of India. I appeal to the concerned Ministers and others that Phase Two which consists of 7300 kms and Phase 3 which consists of 10,000 kms, in which my State of Goa comes, these should be monitored in a proper manner and quality control has to be watched very carefully, as far as these transport facilities are concerned. Then, a question comes, Sir, this has been raised several times in this House and the other House also, that Environment and Forest's rules and regulations come in the way of certain developmental projects. Here, of course, we have to look at environmental things but the procedural delays which are caused because of human elements or bureaucracy or administrative elements, obviously have to be removed. It is not that just because court matters are pending, just because files are not moving that our important projects should lie pending. Therefore, unless these projects are cleared fast, then, we will be able to achieve the targets in this field. I agree that we have to achieve 25 per cent by 2007, 33 per cent by 2012, etc.

Secondly, Sir, there is a need to simplify and consolidate the forest laws. There is a need to consolidate the Forest Act and the Forest (Conservation) Act. Why two separate legislations? That also creates problems because various bodies are consituted under these laws. Since forest is one important aspect, both these legislations can come together.

Thirdly, under these projects, health plays a very vital role. Our health centres and district hospitals are in poor state, throughout the country.

*Not recorded

On the contrary, hospitals are being opened on commercial lines. In the private sector there is a lot of money to open hospitals; and in the same manner a factory is opened, and, on the other, you have no funds for the purpose of operating our own Health Centres and district hospitals. It would not be surprising that one day some judgement will come and in private hospitals the average common man cannot get admission even at the time of emergency. It is possible. Therefore, there is a need, as has been rightly recommended by the Mid-Term Appraisal, there should be a *Sarva Swasth Abhiyan* in the same manner that we have the *Sarva Siksha Abhiyan.* This is the one urgent activity needed in the health sector.

Sir, now, I come to industry. As far as subsidy is concerned, there is an objectionable appraisal made in the Mid-Term Appraisal document. The document says, 'industrial subsidies, generally, do not make a sense as they need to misallocation of resources.' This is an invention being made. I do not understand. Because of subsidies, several sectors have been able to survive in this country. How this Mid-Term Appraisal has come to this extent is shocking? It says, 'However, for redressing geographical imbalance, preference should be given to removing locational disadvantages through the development of infrastructure rather than through subsidies.' If there are geographical problems, then, through, infrastructure, it should be removed. So, infrastructure takes a lot of time. Therefore, this is not a shortcut remedy for the purpose of cutting subsidy.

Sir, fourthly, tourism plays an important role as far as providing employment opportunities is concerned. Today, it is considered as an important sector that gives maximum number of employment opportunities. Therefore, the Government of India has to look into tourism industry as a potential source of employment for young generation. This aspect has not been considered so far. But, I learnt that the Ministry is giving due importance to it.

Finally, IT plays a very important part in today's circumstances. We have to take IT down to villages so that even if a small form is required by a villager, he can get it from an information kiosk or whatever you call it. He need not have to travel ten or twelve kilometres to *Tehsildar* to get a form. At the press of a button and on payment of Rs. 2 or

Rs. 5, a form can be made available or a scheme document can be made available at kiosks. This is the type of IT that we should have in villages. Only then, can we achieve the Plan target. Thank you.

SHRI RAM JETHMALANI (Maharasthra): Mr. Deputy Chairman, Sir, I thank you for your very kind indulgence. I must admit that I am not a farmer. I am not unemployed. And, I am not poor. But, Sir, that, probably, gives me some qualification for speaking with some amount of objectivity about the problems. My friend, Sharad, is here. I have learnt a bit of agricultural economics from him. But, I do not agree with all that he has to say about my friends on the Left. I have vast intellectual differences with the Left. But, I am also their admirer because they have done great service to the world and that is they have humanised capitalism and they have, at least, brought the downtrodden and the underprivileged on the centre stage of political debate. And, I hear everyday about the pinpricks which they are administering to the Government. But even those pinpricks are welcome for they occasionally do produce some good results. I have only to or three observations to make.

You cannot solve these three problems unless you, first of all, adopt the old, old remedy that has been recommended, time and again, but which no political party is prepared to touch, and that is, control of numbers. How to go about it, is a very complex question. But the Minister of Agriculture must, ultimately, realise that that is a great solution to the removal of poverty, both, in the urban, as well as, the rural sector.

Secondly, you have to make the rural areas attractive and pleasant. There is, today, a tremendous pressure on urban areas by reason of the persistent flow of population from the rural centres to the urban centres. Now, unless the Minister of Agriculture is able to reverse this flow, so that people from the urban areas should go into those areas, you cannot improve the standard of living and the buying capacity of the poor farmers. So, you have to make him rich.

Thirdly, Sir, if you have adopted the economics of Adam Smith, that is, the free market economics, the free market economics is not meant merely for the urban areas. It has to be applied even to the rural sector. If you have to apply it to the rurual sector, Sir, there should be one word — that the Pole Star of our agriculture policy must be 'autonomy'

for the farmer. Don't subject him to the price control, to restraints, to taking over his products, and so on and so forth. Give him full freedom to market his produces wherever he wants, at whatever prices he wants. And, that, probably, is the solution of the problem, and not the new-fangled things which we have learnt from our friends, the Leftists.

Sir, ultimately, you have to enlarge the national cake. How to enlarge the national cake? If, today, we are immersed in national debt, your national debt servicing absorbs 72 per cent of the revenue. The remaining 15-16 per cent is taken over by our over-loaded bureaucracy. Then, what remains? Therefore, unless you learn to liquidate the national debt and take this burden off the poor man's shoulder and the poor man's back, you are going to do nothing. In 1971, we talked of *garibi hatao.* And, now, on the 15th of August, this time again, we talked of the same thing that we talked of in 1971, and we talked of in 1975. So, the same *Bhashans* will go on, but nothing will come out of them unless you seriously take the bull by the horns and take sound economics as your Pole Star, your method of solving the problems, then alone you will be able to do it. And, Sir, for God sake make the rural areas as attractive and pleasant as you can. If you have people who are determined to destroy the little pleasure that exists in the urban areas — my friend, Shri Sharad Pawar, is here; he knows what some of his partymen are doing in Bombay — 'kill-joys' are allowed to dominate over the life in the rural areas, nothing is going to happen. You will only be selling more and more poverty; you will be selling more and more misery and creating more and more unhappiness. So, for God sake change your methods of thought and your methods of action.

Thank you, Sir.

SHRI SITARAM YECHURY (West Bengal): Sir, I just want to make a comment. I have great respect for Mr. Jethmalani's intellect. (*Interruptions*)

SHRI RAM JETHMALANI: I was provoked by your present. ...(*Interruptions*)

SHRI SITARAM YECHURY: Since he has admitted that he was provoked by my sitting next to him. (*Interruptions*) Since he is a man of ...(*Interruptions*) Since I have great respect for his intellect, I only want to tell him that coming from Jairam, Sitaram and Ram and Ram ...(*Interruptions*)... all the Rams are on the wrong side. ...(*Interruptions*) Now, Sir, I only want to submit ...(*Interruptions*) I only want to say, Sir, that I have great admiration for Mr. Jethmalani's intellect, but if had actualy embraced Marxism, he would have enriched himself and thereby he would have enriched all of us. Therefore, it is not a mangled theory that we are talking about, but the concerns of the poor and the people that we wish to bring to the centre of the agenda. And, we are happy, at least, that is the consensus about which this debate is taking place. Thank you, Sir.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Before the hon. Minister replies, there is a message from the Lok Sabha. ...(*Interruptions*)...

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS AND THE MINISTER OF PANCHAYATI RAJ (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR): I thought the complaint against Shri Sitaram was that his ideas are old-fangled, not newfangled. ...(*Interruptions*)...

MESSAGE FROM LOK SABHA

The National Rural Employment Guarantee Bill, 2005

SECRETARY-GENERAL: Sir, I have to report to the House the following message received from the Lok sabha, singed by the Secretary-General of the Lok Sabha:

"In accordance with the provisions of rule 96 of the Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business in Lok Sabha, I am directed to enclose the National Rural Employment Guarantee Bill, 2005, as passed by Lok Sabha at its sitting held on the 23rd August, 2005."

Sir, I lay a copy of the Bill on the Table.